

The Art of Essay-Writing

AND OTHER ESSAYS

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WITH A FOREWORD

by

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FOREWORD

A good essayist is an adventurer, going where his fancy takes him, stopping at wayside places, now gazing at a pretty scene, again rushing breathlessly along, scattering ideas and phrases by the score, until, luxuriously exhausted, he reaches his journey's end. He has no preconceived plan, save that of having 'a good time'. He is determined to get the most out of his enterprise, an artist exulting in the joy which the exercise of his gift brings, full of zest, pleased and intent on pleasing. He does not harp on the major notes all the time; his whispers and his asides are as attractive. He is taking you into his confidence. The dressing gown in his appropriate costume and a pair of old slippers. And the peculiar thing is that the subject is of no importance. A good essay is like good talk, at its best when concerned with trivialities. Ask yourself after a good talk what topics were discussed. You hardly recall a memorable phrase or an amusing anecdote. You are surprised that you do not remember what it was that you had found so interesting. And yet you are certain that you had enjoyed the talk. It is the same with a good essay—with this difference that you can repeat your experience as often as you like, recapture the aroma and the thrill, and whatever the subsequent fate of the essayist may be and whether he grows up to be dull and boresome, there, in that essay, his fresh adventurous spirit is kept eternally young.

FOREWORD

When are the best essays written? In every answer to such a question there is the inevitable suspicion of egotism. But one may venture to say that the best essays are by those who have acquired some knowledge of the world but in whom increase of knowledge has not meant increase of sorrow; by those who are still ready for another adventure brave and new, but are thrice-armed with wisdom and know that the joy of life is for him who, curious paradox, can at will romp and jump or sit and lounge stretching his lazy length along a stream or under a tree.

Addison, Steele, Stevenson, Lamb, Lucas, Lynd—these are the essayists one loves most, and their most memorable essays are on subjects that would appear most unpromising—Rosat Pig, Old China, Plea for Gas Lamps, Sir Roger in the Church. There are others who are always in full dress, with war paint on—Walter Pater, Macaulay, Carlyle, Johnson. Yet others who cannot forget that they are specialists and scholars, whose learning let men forget at their peril—Huxley, Herbert Spencer, Browne. They have all their usefulness, all sorts are needed to make the world. But the writers we like to go back to, whose friendship we value and whom we like for constant companions are shy, retiring, gentle Elia, the irritable ugly angelic doctor Goldsmith, the brave, gay good companion, the confirmed invalid R. L. S., the bustling downright giant G. K. C., men who seem to write with effortless ease and therefore give us so much pleasure.

* * *

A request to contribute a Foreword is an unsporting

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effort to obtain commendation or at least disarm criticism. Has one ever heard of a critical Foreword, except by Mr. Bernard Shaw who is capable, of course, of anything? I have, notwithstanding, agreed with much pleasure to bless this well-wishing adventurer in setting forth as I know that Mr Kapur is a well-qualified pilot. He has learning and, what does not always accompany it, a nimble wit. He has a light touch which many of us lack: we are, in writing English, heavy and ponderous, qualities tolerable perhaps in a teacher but fatal to an essayist. He has travelled wide and far and has kept his ears and eyes open. He writes well and on subjects that will be of interest to young readers: superstitions; wasting time, advertisement, the ice-cream vendor, matters sartorial, on others that will attract those who desire a slightly serious type of essays—the necessity of religion, poetry and modern life, on utopias. But whatever the subject he succeeds in making the essay of absorbing interest.

Mr Kapur's volume contains, in addition, twenty other essays representing the various stages of its growth as a literary form from the Eighteenth Century down to our own times. It is possible, of course, to quarrel with his selections, to demand, for instance, why Tyndall has been included and A. G. Gardiner left out: but then that only means that everyman must be his own anthologist. One point is obvious, that everyone of the essays is eminently readable. And what better excuse or justification can any essayist desire?—to be readable at all ages and in most moods, to become better with

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age? Let the young aspirant take that for his ideal to produce, at least to "essay" to produce, a piece that will wear well

AMARANATHA JHA

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PREFACE

There is such a lot of rubbish selling in the Indian book-markets in the name of 'model essays' that it seemed almost a duty to write a worth while book on the subject. At least that has been my aim, whether or not I have succeeded I leave others to decide. To read good essays is a perpetual delight, and in matters of style more can be learnt by an intelligent appreciation than by filling-in the sketch-plans supplied by others. The Indian college system of essay-writing is often so vicious that it is necessary to utter a word of caution against its evils. It is too much to hope that the hints suggested in the introduction and the essays following it would improve the general tone, but if any one can learn writing by reading a collection of essays, I think he will get more out of this than out of many another of which I know. A study of the last twenty essays in the volume is, therefore, specially recommended. These have been chosen from the work of some of the masters in this kind, and the task of selection was by no means easy. I had to find out essays on as many different subjects as possible, and yet, in some cases, close enough to give the reader scope for comparison. A few favourites like Chesterton, Beerbohm and Lucas are conspicuous by their absence, the omission being partly due to copyright difficulties, and partly because it was considered that their works are otherwise easily accessible in Indian Libraries. There were some others equally good, but whose essays were not so well-known, some of them are

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being now published in India for the first time. Difficult and allusive writers and essays had to be avoided but few good essays are without allusions. To help the reader in appreciating these I have added such critical and explanatory notes as I thought necessary. As I was not presenting a historical anthology, the essays are arranged according to affinities of style and subject-matter rather than chronologically. Beginning with the objective manner of Steele, I conclude with such subjective compositions as those of Lamb and Edward Thomas. My own essays are also arranged according to this principle.

Altogether it is the only book of its kind, and will be, I hope, of real benefit to students alike of the Intermediate and the B A Classes. Perhaps even advanced students may find it of some use.

It now remains for me to express my grateful acknowledgement of the permission which the following have kindly given to publish copyright matter. To the proprietors of *The Times* I am obliged for two 'third leaders',—"Ourselves alone" and "Larger feet for women", to Mr Wilfred Meynell for "Rain" by Alice Meynell, to Messrs Jonathan Cape for "Genius" by Samuel Butler, to Messrs J M Dent and Sons Ltd for "Clouds" by Edward Thomas and to Messrs John Lane, The Bodley Head Limited for "My bicycle and I" by Vernon Lee.

Lastly it remains my pleasant duty to thank my friend and teacher, Professor Amaranatha Jha who has very kindly taken the trouble of going through the MS and of writing a Foreword to the collection.

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R K

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AND OTHER ESSAYS

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The Art of Essay-writing

I

To write a good essay is as difficult as to write a good short-story and the knack is almost impossible to teach. A man must have a sensitive soul, a keen perception, a power of analysis, some humour and originality, and above all a gift of style to write essays that would interest more than one and perhaps endure in time. Such persons, it is obvious, would not look here for advice, nor do we pretend to offer them any. They must be a law unto themselves. But below them there are two kinds of essayists,—the beginners, and those who can write tolerably well but feel that they have not yet realized themselves and that they could do better,—to whom we would say a few words on the mystery of this art.

II

As this book is intended for circulation in India, it is necessary to start by commenting on the methods of essay-writing that are generally followed by our students in the colleges and the universities.

It is a deplorable fact that the majority of Indian students write shockingly bad essays. Much of this incompetence is certainly due to the difficulty

of using a foreign language accurately, but that is not all. Essays written in vernacular are naturally more readable, but even here we rarely come across a piece of work that is delightful for its point of view and original in its presentation. The students are not entirely to blame, for the system of education is so thoroughly bad that no attempt is ever made to get the best out of them. Such difficult and even absurd subjects are set for class-work that it is no wonder they come to look upon essay-writing as the most distasteful of drudgeries. Fancy a student of the Intermediate classes, who as yet cannot write either long sentences or a number of sentences without committing several mistakes, being asked to submit an essay on this trite, exasperating and perhaps formidable subject,—“Life is a pendulum ’twixt smiles and tears”! Or on that other topic, no less sublime,—“Life is a stage &c,” or on those hardy annuals on which every student who goes through a college has to express his views,—“The Child is father of the Man,” “Peace has its victories no less renowned than war,” “Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thoughts.” It is no unjust condemnation to say that on some of these subjects the teachers who set them will not themselves be able to write readable essays without cribbing.

To the student only one way is open, he consults the several text-books of the so-called “model” essays, and as these subjects are repeated in the class year after year, he is sure to find some “material” conveniently cooked up in those volumes. This he

rehashes in one way or another and thus makes it his own. He did not grasp the meaning of the subject when he began writing, and he is none the wiser when he has finished it.

Now if there is any sorer reading than the usual text-book of essays selling in the Indian market we should like to know. The majority of these compilers are, we hope, honest enough, but they lack just two qualifications for writing essays,—they cannot write correct English and they have rarely any clear ideas about the subject with which they are going to deal. What makes them so dangerous, and considerably responsible for debasing the talent of the Indian students is the pompous qualifications which their books are sponsored. Either they plead their long experience in making 'Summaries' and forging 'Keys' as an adequate testimony of their ability for writing essays, or, if they have had the chance of coming to England, the so-called knowledge of the "latest doctrines" about essay-writing "now prevailing in the West". Of these "latest doctrines" we, on our part, are blissfully unaware. We only know that Lamb and Leigh Hunt wrote their essays before these doctrines were invented, and that not even a knowledge of these doctrines has enabled the modern compilers to write faultless and idiomatic English composition.

Indeed it is true to say that given subjects which they can comprehend, most Indian students would be able to write sufficiently readable essays if they did not imitate these estimable model-makers.

But where the ideal itself is so hopelessly defective, the students can hardly be expected to excel their masters.

III

To say that one has written a "model" essay is to be extraordinarily pretentious. The present writer does not claim to have performed the feat, and of the first thirty-eight essays in the book, written on as many subjects he does not offer one as a "Model", held up for imitation and incapable of improvement. It is no conceit to suggest that on several subjects on which he has written, two or three other equally good or equally bad essays could have been written without any overlapping. So much depends on a particular point of view. A subject is capable of treatment from several angles, and the personality of the writer (if the writer has a personality) always introduces a new element in the composition.

For these reasons we neither offer "model" essays, nor hold out any false hopes of enabling a student to pass an examination by giving him a collection of nostrums. Few books, however high-sounding their aim, are able to do that, and a sensible examiner can always give subjects which are not comprehended by the most inclusive of anthologies, because the number of interesting subjects on which essays could be written is a legion. The only essays in this book which are worthy of emulation are the last twenty, others are given mostly with a view to present some ideas on

the subject treated, and to show, to the beginners at any rate, at least one way of tackling them. Whatever else their merits may be, it is hoped that they are written in correct and idiomatic English, and that if they do not improve anybody's style, they certainly will not deteriorate it. They are also convenient examples to illustrate these remarks.

If the student cannot choose his own subjects for class-work or in the examination, he can do so for writing essays in his leisure hours. Almost any subject that attracts him will do. One of the delights of essay-writing (alas, so rarely known to our students) is to express one's ideas on subjects that seem trivial and out of the way. There is a fascination in championing the wrong cause, in looking at the neglected side of things. *Getting up on cold mornings* would, at first sight, seem to be a subject on which much could not be said, and yet Leigh Hunt's essay is full of delight and charm. *On being a postman* is another interesting and uncommon type. Many more of a similar description could be suggested. You may write essays *On being a butcher*, *On being an engine-driver*, *On being a thief*, *On being a hangman*, indeed on any subject which enables you to treat life from an angle not commonly your own.

The best way of writing good essays is to keep writing, to keep taking delight in the task, and to have something to say on the subject in hand.

Now strange as it might seem, the essential requirements of a good essayist are only two. He should be able to express himself correctly and accurately,

and he should have some ideas on the subject with which he is going to deal. A negative qualification we have already stated,—he must not imitate or be guided by the usual text-books on the subject that claim to accomplish wonders their writers were not able to perform in their own case.

1 As for expression, this means that the student should be able to use the English language without grammatical mistakes or idiomatic solecisms. No one can hope to write a good essay who is not at all able to write accurately. The English language is by no means very easy to learn, and those who want to learn it must make a sincere effort. This is not the place to analyse all the mistakes that are usually committed by Indian students in writing English, we can only say that if a person is not sensitive enough to learn by extensive reading, he must study a grammar carefully.

The most obvious mistakes are about the use of articles, sometimes they are omitted, sometimes supplied needlessly, and sometimes 'a' and 'the' are used without discrimination, with the result that the meaning of the English sentence becomes very different from what the writer intended. There is no such nicety about the use of articles in Hindustani, hence the difficulty in understanding this point. 'This' and 'that' must also be used with care.

The concordance of tenses is another tricky matter, and one way of avoiding mistakes in this direction is to write short sentences. Ultimately one shall have to know the proper use of words.

It is necessary to realize that the idioms of speech in English and in Hindustani are not the same and therefore an exact translation from one to the other is impossible. The failure to realize this results in numerous mistakes about the use of prepositions. To give just one illustration of what we mean,—we might say that in Hindustani, 'at', 'on', and 'upon' may be translated as '*par*'. Now '*par*' is the preposition we would use in two such different sentences as '*Kya tum ghar par rahogae?*' and '*Iss ko maiz par rakho*'. But in English, the first would be translated as 'Will you be *at* home?' and the second as 'Put it *on* the table.' It is a very elementary point, but sometimes even students of the B A classes make mistakes in the use of prepositions.

These and many other blunders can be avoided by reading in the English language extensively. Novels and current English periodicals are undoubtedly a good means of improving one's knowledge, and while in the beginning it is necessary to find out the meaning of words one does not know, the idiom of the language,—the method of expression—sinks into one's mind imperceptibly.

Apart from the grammatic and idiomatic mistakes of expression, there are several others which are invited by the students themselves. There is no sense at all in using difficult words the exact meaning of which you do not know, and even if the dictionary-meaning is known, there may be other shades which are unknown to you and the ignorance of which would spoil your sense. *It is impossible to*

over-emphasize the need of simplicity in the case of beginners To know what you have to say and to say it plainly is a far more satisfactory task than to stuff an essay with hard and difficult words whose meaning you only half-understand

There are a few other mistakes against which we might utter a caution. Many students are inclined to be ornate, and frequently exaggerate their statements They try to be clever and end by exposing their folly. They use high-flown similes and metaphors Now a beginner should *avoid similes and other ornaments of speech like poison* Nothing is more annoying than to find a man who can hardly write correct English indulging in poetic flights

A similar warning must need be uttered against quotations. As nothing is pleasanter than the art of happy quotation, so nothing is more difficult, and *a beginner would do well to avoid it all together*. He might use one or two if he feels that they are appropriate and he cannot resist the temptation. But more than that he simply must not use Instead of saying very plain thing in their own terms, our students use all kinds of known and unknown quotations for trivial matters And when a quotation has to be given it should not be given in that stupid, inverted way which is so common in India;—‘says Bacon’, ‘says Addison’ , why not just ‘Bacon says’ or ‘Addison says’? Or if ‘says Bacon’ is to be preferred, let it come in the middle of a quotation “Studies”, says Bacon, “are to serve for . . .” is right, but, “says Bacon, ‘Studies are to . . .’” is absurd

Other clichés such as, "the poet sings," "says the bard", "that great noble author" are also to be avoided.

Without these adventitious aids, a student should try to put in plain and simple language, in short sentences and in a consecutive order his impressions about a particular subject, and more likely than not it will be a readable essay

2. As for matter, here again an extensive study will pay. The more one has read the better the essays one is able to write. It is surprising how seemingly disconnected ideas come together in the mind of a well-read man. An essayist like Mr. Belloc is able to bring almost anything under the sun into any essay he may happen to write. While reading, it is not at all a bad scheme that one should keep a commonplace book in which to transcribe all the beautiful ideas or sentences one comes across in the course of one's study. These extracts may or may not serve as quotations on future occasions, but if they are read again and again (and commonplace books should be often read) they become part of one's mental equipment and enrich the mind not only by being there but by setting into motion new trains of ideas. Study alone, however, is no good if it is unaccompanied by thinking and reflection. It is painful to realize that very few Indian students do any thinking at all, the majority of them just read books, get them by heart, make notes and summaries, so that although they will be able to tell you all that a writer has to say, perhaps they have not one single critical opinion about

his work. A critical study necessitates thinking, preserves the freshness and individuality of outlook and saves time.

IV

So far we have stated the qualifications of an essayist,—the ability to express and the presence of some ideas which need expression,—and we have briefly indicated how a beginner should set about acquiring them. Even in the case of advanced students who can write fairly tolerable essays, the problem remains the same, the problem of expression and the problem of having something to say. It is a difference of degree and not of kind. Having acquired the capacity to write correctly and idiomatically, a student has now to think of adding some grace to his writing, to care somewhat about the style and his manner of presentation.

The truest thing that has been said about "style" is that when a person sincerely wants to say a thing, the best way of saying it comes to him perfectly naturally. In its ultimate analysis "style" is nothing else but the rhythmic expression of the inner urge of a man. However, something could certainly be done by instruction.

The best way to improve one's style is to study the great masters who are distinguished for theirs. To this end the last twenty essays which we have included in our volume will be found exceedingly useful. We have chosen essays from as many writers upon as many subjects as was possible within the limit

We have arranged them not chronologically but according to affinities of subject-matter and increasing complexities of style. The last few may be called the 'I'-essays, because it is difficult to imagine them being written by anybody except their writers, and because they reveal a very personal point of view. The language of the last two is almost poetry. This arrangement also brings out the fact how several writers writing upon the same subject may look upon things in quite different ways and the change that is brought about by differences in style. Both Alice Meynell and Edward Thomas are writing nature-essays and yet their styles are as dissimilar as their sensibilities. The well-knit, grave, and slow-marching prose of Mrs. Meynell is very different from the wistful and lyrical ecstasies of Edward Thomas. Vernon Lee, Lamb, Leigh Hunt and the writer of the second extract from *The Times* have written very personal essays but the differences in humour have resulted in different styles. It is fascinating to notice how these things happen and a careful study of such points will go a longer way to improve one's style than any slavish following of text-book rules. The essays of Huxley and Tyndall show how beautifully one may write on scientific or half-scientific subjects. The essays of Addison and Butler are written on allied subjects and although both use simple language their simplicities are not the same. The essays from *The Times* would show how one may write short, neat and artistically finished essays on grave and on frivolous subjects alike. Fielding's essay is

noticeable for its gentle irony, the essay on *Banquets* for the peculiar kind of humour we find in Goldsmith. Newman is a great master of prose and it should be observed how he marshals his clauses into an elaborate and ordered music.

Of the essayists one could study with profit, Addison, Steele and Goldsmith should be mentioned first. These writers have such an easy grace and mastery over the language that it is long before one realizes that they have what is commonly known as "style." On lighter subjects Leigh Hunt could be taken as an excellent model. Samuel Butler, the author of *Erewhon* has not written many essays (the one we give is taken from his *Note-books*), but he writes with great simplicity and charm and his novels will repay study. Another writer whose works one may read with profit and delight is Henry Fielding. It is a pity that this, certainly one of the greatest (and in some ways the greatest of the) novelists of England is so much neglected by those who read English literature in our country. Hazlitt is inclined to be pompous and one should avoid imitating him. Lamb, as he is the greatest of the English essayists, is almost impossible to copy, but he should be studied slowly and with loving attention. Of the modern essayists, Max Beerbohm writes nearest Lamb, while Chesterton, Belloc, Roland Knox and E. V. Lucas are delightful and instructive for their embroideries on slight and tenuous themes.

We have treated the question of style at such length, because a man who can write well may take

up any subject, say almost anything on it, and give us a delightful essay. Those who write good essays never go by the footling rules of the text-book compilers

But once again, a few things might be said to the student who is beginning to get a sense of style and is groping for form. Here also the harm done by the writers of "model" essays is incalculable. We wonder whoever introduced the practice of writing essays by first of all elaborately analysing the meaning of the title. To take an illustration—Supposing we were asked to write an essay on *Party System*, we are told that we should start by jotting down the following points "What is a system? What is a party? What is a party system? When did it come into being? What are its advantages? What are its disadvantages? The truth lies somewhere between the two". Now a more absurd way of writing an essay could not be imagined. Surely an essay is not an extended article in a dictionary, and nobody who did not know what the meaning of the subject was would ever care to read it. It is indeed necessary that one should be clear in one's mind as to what 'party system' means, but *this process of analysis should precede the writing of the essay and not form part of it*. The subject which we have chosen for illustration happens to be capable of the "advantages—disadvantages" treatment, but this method is unfortunately universally applied in essay-writing in India. At its best it is monotonous and boring, at its worst it is unbearable. Such a rigid division mars the writer's suppleness. We need not

be such sages as to weigh the two sides of a question dispassionately, we might emphasize only one point of view and neglect the other.

For it should be borne in mind that dulness is the greatest offence in essay-writing. The examiner, if we take the examination point of view, certainly knows what is absolutely to be known upon the subject, what he is looking forward to (or should) is what *you* think about it. The personal point of view which is so rarely expressed in the essays of Indian students is what makes an essay worth while. We do not say that the statements should always be made in the first person singular, but we do say that in some essays this form should certainly be used, and that in others it could be used profitably. There is no reason to be afraid of the "I."

We need not repeat trite remarks like, "students should choose the subject most after their own hearts from the examination paper" etc etc. No one who is not a fool will ever chose a subject on which he was less competent to write in preference to another on which he was more so. Similarly about "order", "coherence", "unity" and such-like terms. These things are obvious to any one who knows a word about writing. If there was no order or coherence it would be a muddle and not an essay at all. In this respect we would suggest that the points which occur to you when you begin to think upon a subject should be jotted down pell-mell, and then cut down, added to, and re-edited before you evolve the skeleton of an essay.

In the form of an essay, as indeed in any other writing, two things need a special consideration,—the beginning and the end. A well-rounded essay is always more delightful than one which tails off clumsily. The beginning is important (and needs more time in thinking and execution than any other part) because it should be capable of engaging the reader's attention. In this respect, several essays in this volume will be regarded as interesting.

This, in brief, is all that we have to say about the art of essay-writing. We do not make any extravagant claims, we do not offer "models", we do not guarantee any success in an examination. But we do hope that by precept and example we would be able to help, at least some way, those who sincerely want to write readable essays.

My Ideal College

Up on the top of a mountain, commanding a full view of the low-lying valley, there is situated a college I consider the best in the world. It is five miles from the nearest town, and is rather isolated in its position. A little colony of servants and shopkeepers who supply the needs of the students has grown about the place, otherwise, leaving the members of the college this part of the mountain is comparatively uninhabited. There is a motor-bus running to the town every evening, but students have to obtain previous permission of the Warden, before making the trip.

Behind the college-building and a little removed from it are the residential quarters of the professors, and opposite them the college hostel. All the students and teachers belonging to this institution have to live in the hostel or the quarters, "day scholars" are not permitted.

As the accommodation is limited, and because of its select policy, the number of students in the college is not large. Two hundred is the limit. For these, including the principal, there are twenty-five teachers, and instruction is given in Arts subjects only. The classes are confined to the B A, and the M A. There is a great rush for admission, as the number of vacancies in any year is always restricted.

In the management of the college, the students are allowed some share. Let us first note it in the case of new admissions.

It is the policy of the institution that nobody should ever be admitted who is not distinguished in one way or another. He might be a first class man, or he might have made his mark in sport, or he might be an excellent speaker, or he might be a musician or an incipient artist. Talent of some sort he must have, or, at least the fair promise of one. In the college, no labour is spared to bring out the hidden capabilities of the students, but as the staff is not large, the authorities do not like to admit without discrimination, and then set out on a talent hunt. Because in the paper-qualifications of an applicant his best and worst are not always included, admissions to this college are really decided on after an interview. For this purpose there is a board of five members. Of these, the principal and the vice-principal are two. The staff elects two of its members every year to sit on this body, and one is likewise elected by the students' Union Society. Thus constituted, the board tries to find the intellectual alertness of the new comer beyond what his qualifications may signify. When one is admitted, one becomes part of the college,—inheritor of its past glory, builder of its future renown. The college gives its students all it has to give, and it also stands by them in time of need, it, therefore, has a perfect right to be judicious in choosing the fresh blood it will have in its veins. On one

point the board of admission are very particular. They would not have anyone,—or have only a very exceptional one—with a weak constitution. They believe that without a healthy body there cannot be a really healthy mind. They believe in bringing up a fine race for the country. Better educate a well-built but less intelligent young man, than waste your time and energy on a nervous but acute and cadaverous fellow.

After admission, one gets a room in the hostel and has to come into residence at once. When one has passed the B A, one is given a set of rooms,—a bedroom and a study. The undergraduates have a single room only. It is not necessary to describe the equipment of the hostel, everything is for comfort and homeliness. The directors of the college believe that without a modest amount of ease, serious study is not possible. The hostel has an excellent library under the charge of an advanced student, and the reading room gets all the important periodicals. There is also a swimming-pool and swimming is compulsory. Of other forms of games and exercises, there are several, and students take part in them according to inclination and medical advice. The college gymnasium which is supervised by a retired German military official is a popular institution. There is a thorough medical examination of the students once a month, and with all these precautions it is not surprising that the health of the members is exemplary.

The food supplied in the hostel is simple and

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wholesome It is prepared according to scientific methods and is neither over-fried nor over-spiced. The morning and the evening meals are served in the hostel hall and there is common dining, the latter meal being attended by the members of the staff. Tea or light refreshments in the afternoon one might have wherever one liked. The students look upon common dining as a great delight, and it certainly promotes the spirit of friendliness and comradeship.

There are several other social activities of the hostel, of which the fortnightly musical concerts and the yearly production of a play deserve special mention. Debates, of course, are held every week. The M.A. students reading a particular subject join together in a "Study Group" and under the guidance of a junior teacher study problems in which they are interested, but which do not form part of the regular course. There is a hostel magazine edited by a senior student, in which only thoughtful and original contributions are published.

Something should also be said about the college course of studies. English is the medium of instruction, but the authorities insist on the students' knowing one other European language besides,—French, in particular. There are no cultural prejudices, Sanskrit and Persian are supposed to be as valuable as Latin and Greek, but while these are the classics, for the knowledge of modern developments in art and literature one has to learn the English and the French languages. Training in music and painting is also

MY IDEAL COLLEGE

given. The college hours are from ten to one in the morning; afternoons are for games, evenings for study and discussion. The long vacations last three months,—from December to February, and there is a shorter vacation of a fortnight in August. Otherwise, except for Sundays, the college goes on regularly. During the winter vacations students may go in parties to visit places of interest.

Every student is under the special charge of a teacher, each teacher having about ten students under his charge. It is his duty to look after the progress of his wards and to help them in their difficulties. This intimate knowledge of one's work enables him to give very valuable and necessary advice. Knowing their defects and how to remedy them, the students do not waste their energies fruitlessly. That is why with a minimum of effort such excellent results are obtained.

It will be seen that the college neglects neither the body nor the mind, and education, after all, is the training of the whole man. It is no wonder that this institution has supplied some of the best poets and politicians to the country, nor is it surprising that its old students never forget the debt of gratitude they owe it, and which, whenever they can, they repay in terms of large donations.

If the foregoing description is too alluring and makes you ask where exactly this ideal college is situated, the answer shall have to be given,—in the imagination of the writer of this essay.

On Seeing a Ghost

Only once did I see a ghost I cannot say that I completely grasped his outline, and at this distance of time even that august memory is getting dim. Any way, I will briefly set down the details of my adventure

I was twelve years old and there was a huge *pīpal* tree in our school compound During the mid-day interval I and my friends used to sit at the roots of this tree, and as we cracked the nuts which were stuffed in our pockets, we entertained each other with what stories we had learnt from our grand-mothers. They were all very wonderful, and dealt with a variety of subjects, although a number of them centred round a picturesque personage called *Sheikh Chilli*, and quite a few described the ways of ghosts By a curious coincidence all of us had heard a story about this great *pīpal* tree in our school, and all were convinced that it was peopled by creatures other than the fowl of the air The ghosts of our stories were kindly fellows and were not known to have frightened anybody if they were given a good feed, and if they were not, and therefore, became troublesome and teasing, they quieted down as soon as a few delicacies were laid at the spot they had chosen to make their own It was for some such reason that each of us quietly placed at the root of this tree a couple of nuts

ON SEEING A GHOST

before we ourselves started to eat. We never prayed openly, but I remember that as I put down my share of the offerings, I muttered softly, "Now here are your nuts, eat them and don't trouble us. We are but little boys." Our conviction that some mysterious being inhabited the tree was strengthened by the fact that when we came to the spot in the interval next day, no nut was to be found, though occasionally we found the shells about the place. We knew that our offerings were accepted and we felt happy. We never saw the ghost. We talked about him familiarly, but we did not see him.

One day, however, the unexpected happened. It was the rainy season and I had gone to school in the evening to play foot-ball. I had a friend with me and both of us thoroughly enjoyed the game. We stayed playing till a late hour, and when the servant took away the ball I took out a little one from my pocket and went on with the game. We had often done that and so there was nothing to worry us. But while we were playing, there had risen from the east an immense mass of cloud which we did not notice until it had spread out across the heavens, and soon it grew very dark and before we had marched ten yards homewards heavy drops of rain began to fall, and presently there was a torrential downpour. We were obliged to take shelter under the familiar *pipal* tree which stood huge in front of us. We sat at the root, and although there was nothing to be afraid about, we began to have a nameless fear. It was

pitch dark around us, lightning was flashing, there was an occasional roll of thunder and it seemed as though it would never stop raining that night. We nestled close to each other, and as I moved a little my hand fell upon an object which made me shiver. The nuts! There they were, and the 'papal-e' (so we called him) had not yet taken them. Perhaps he takes them only at night, perhaps he might be feeling hungry now, perhaps he might come while we were there! At the thought a cold shiver passed down my spine, for however friendly the 'papal-e' might have been to us, I had no desire to see his face. My friend was equally frightened, and so we both closed our eyes, thinking that if he had to come he would take away his grub, and if we did not look at him he would not notice us and of course he would not trouble us having eaten our things for such a long time. I had been in this state for about two minutes and was thinking of all the ghosts I had known in stories and the way they treated little children, when I felt something like a walnut-shell strike my head, as though some one dropped it from the tree,—*fit!* I uttered a piercing cry, opened my eyes, and behold,—twenty yards away from me I saw a huge column of smoke, four times the size of man, advancing towards us! The body was not visible but at the top I saw an awful beard hanging down an enormous nose,—there was no mouth, and I have now forgotten whether he had two eyes or one. Instead of feet he had a little pot, out of which he seemed

to have emerged and on which he was now walking. Curiously enough he very much resembled the 'demon of the pot' whose illustration I saw in my text-book everyday. This did not surprise me, when, later on, I reflected that as one man was like another so must be the ghosts. At the moment I was too stunned, and crying 'Oiii-1-1-1', ran in the direction of the road as fast as my legs would carry me. My friend had seen him too, and was in a similar fright. When we reached the road we were shivering with fear, and had we not met a cowherd going towards the city, whom we requested to take us home, I cannot say what might have happened to us that night. On reaching home I wept as much as I possibly could, told the tale to my grandmother who gave me a magnificent peach and sent me to bed. I did not get up till eight o'clock next morning.

When I met my friend in the school I told him I was convinced it was our own fault, after all the poor ghost had to come to eat his food. We should not have stayed there. Nor should we fear him more if we place an extra nut for him for some days. My friend agreed with me and I am glad to say we never saw the '*pīpal-wala*' again. On one point, however, I and my friend violently differed and do to this day. He said that the '*pīpal-wala*' did not walk on a pot at all. He came on a huge, black buffalo, or rather under it, for instead of riding on the back, he clung to the belly and had wound his legs round the creature's body. From between the buffalo's front legs

he kept shaking his beard and had a merry twinkle in his eye.

Of fairies I never had the luck to make an intimate acquaintance. I knew they were dainty little creatures and had gossamer wings. They played about the sleeping human beings, but whenever I opened my eyes they vanished away. I lured them to play with my dolls and they did, but they always kept a distance. Sometimes, I was told, they brought for me rose-red apples, and such sweet apples I have never tasted since. The visions these fairies evoked, the gardens in which I fancied I played with them, the silver flutes, the dainty diamond-trumpets, the filmy silken robes that fade in the purple light of the dawn, the soft, very soft minuets which they danced on emerald grass strewn with dew, as one and only one star shed tiny flakes of light on that scene,—my visions of fairies are getting dim. Soon I might lose them completely.

Fairies and ghosts, symbols of the childhood of human race, tokens of the childhood of my life. What powers of beauty, good and evil they represent, who shall say? And are they real? He must be a bold man who would maintain an emphatic negative. Science says they are naught and we half believe in science. Once upon a time they certainly were real. And now? Now I have lost the magic of imagination, now I am growing old.

India described to an Englishman who had never seen it

You want me to tell you what India is like, so that before you make up your mind to visit it, you should have an adequate idea about the country. It is not easy, you will see, to give you all the relevant information in a short space, and then, information alone will not constitute the picture. I shall have to mix up a few facts with my own impressions, and hope that your knowledge of things at home will enable you, by comparison, to fill in the details.

Perhaps the most important, certainly the most noticeable, fact about India is the vastness of her size. Your politicians must have dinned this into your ears already, but it is a point which you, living in a small island, are too apt to forget. It is easy enough to go from Dover to Clyde within twenty-four hours, but the fastest train will take you at least three days to cross India from one end to the other. The country, moreover, is thickly populated. From these two facts you can deduce much interesting information. In such a big tract of land you must needs expect diversified humanity. Start from Cape Comorin to Kashmir, and you will find all kinds of people, from the un-symmetrical and swarthy Madrasis to the tall and comely inhabitants of the Himalayan valley. In climate too, you will find a

surprising range In the South it is always hot and equable, then you go to the temperate regions of the North, and Simla is delightfully cold As dress depends upon weather, you will notice among us very interesting sartorial variations The North-West abounds in pyjamas while dhoti is the common wear in Bengal The Southerners economize in cloth, because like Shakespeare's Prince of Morocco, they are close-neighbour'd to the sun The food also keeps changing from province to province, but I can assure you, you will always find it rich and strange

From the country's vastness, then, springs its diversity I have often wondered whether it is good to be geographically great You live in a small Island, and you have an enviable sense of national unity In times of distress, England stands up like one man The resources of your country can be properly marshalled, and the individuals submerge their proper under the national consciousness We do not have this machine-like perfection Our sympathies and loyalties are divided Men of the north are in many important ways different from the men of the south, and the east and the west do not always look eye to eye There are so many languages in the country, people from one province would not understand those from another supposing they were to live at the same place, unless they knew either English or Hindustani Moreover, it is no easy task to make such a huge mass of people follow the path of self-abnegation You might as well have the whole of Europe live up to

the same rule.

But while we lack your sense of solidarity, we certainly gain in picturesqueness. You will find among us a whole world of new festivals. Some would delight you by their queerness, others by their unaffected joviality. Although you would find in our social gaiety an abandon which, except perhaps on the "Guy Fawkes' night," is altogether foreign to your soil. Latterly, however, an ugly feature, the renaissance of vandalism,—the quarrels between Hindus and Muslims,—mars our festivity. I only hope that you may not have an occasion to witness this exhibition of the brute. Apart from the festivals, you will also find a pleasing wealth of colour. The eyes tired with the sombre black and grey of London will find something soothing in the gorgeous *saris* of the Indian women. The men too wear white or coloured garments here as against the customary sober of the 'town'. You must have heard a lot about the Indian turban. You should go to the native states of Rajputana to see the art of colouring this complicated head-gear. And while you are in the states, you will also come across a bit of 'Indian India',—the country as it was in the past, and might have been so to-day if we had not been impregnated by the West. The architecture of the Indian palaces is distinctively our own. These imposing edifices in marble, delicate as well as massive, record the high-water mark of our constructive genius. You would, of course, not miss the elephants. If you get acquainted with a *Ruler*,

you would also have some *shikar*,—the great attraction of India for the Englishman. Whatever else you might bring against our princes, you certainly can never accuse them of parsimony. Their entertainment is lavish and kingly. They are fond of a luxurious ceremonial which gives colour to life, but some of them are exceedingly sympathetic towards their subjects. Altogether they are a mixed lot,—part of the romance that is India—and can furnish argument both for and against a monarchical rule.

Let us now go to some places of historic interest. Come over to Delhi,—the stretch of ruins skirting the modern town embraces the remains of seven others that were peopled before this. Here battles were fought that decided the fates of kings and dynasties. Lording over this heap of moulding masonry stands the well-known *Kutab-minar*, one of the, or I forget, the tallest spire in the world. Old buildings in India, you will see, are more sadly picturesque than elsewhere, because here they stand in tact though unpeopled, you feel as if they were populated yesterday, and but now Time has taken away the occupants. In the town itself you will visit the fort and see the marvellous halls of the Moghuls. The heart is filled with a tender melancholy when you realize that here, dancing to the tune of rippling streams that flow within the rooms, Persian damsels once used their arts to please a king. See Agra. The Pearl Mosque and the *Taj* are symphonies in marble. Here was a monarch who loved like a poet and grieved like a lover.

The memories of Akbar, Jahangir and Shahjahan crowd each other out in the Fort that faces the *Taj*. Perhaps you would go to Lahore to see the gardens of these Moghuls. You would certainly visit Benares whose ghats,—piles on piles of stairs and masonry, temples and palaces standing cheek by jowl, a strange mingling of architectures,—record the history of two thousand years in stone. You must not miss Jaipur and Jodhpur, nor some of the famous Hindu temples in the South. If you are interested in Buddhism you must go to Bihar.

I feel I have only given you a hurried account and many important things have been left out. But perhaps this will suffice. I must not altogether take away the charm of novelty from the face of things you will visit here. I have told you nothing of the motley crowds you will see in our streets, princes and beggars (you will see too many beggars here), merchants and police inspectors, *mahajans* and farmers, landlords and priests all mixed up in a vast concourse of humanity. I have told you nothing of our seasons either, but leaving the rainy months, it will always be brilliant sunshine. Is not this fact alone an irresistible temptation? When will you come?

On Going to see a Play

The New Parsee Theatrical Company,—one of those eternally touring organizations whose periodic visits make provincial towns astir—come to our city, and I decided to see one of their shows. The day was, therefore, fixed. I chose a Saturday, when, according to their announcement, “with entirely new scenes and costumes and many a costly stage-property” they were going to present their “great success”,—*The Punjab Mail*.

Now half the fun in seeing a play consists in pleasurable anticipations of the event. If I had to go on a Saturday evening I was full of excitement all the preceding week. I had already booked two seats, for I had prevailed on one of my friends to spend the evening with me. It is hardly fun alone. Having settled this preliminary, I gave my best suit to the washerman strictly requiring him to return it in four days’ time. Then, for the next two or three days there were discussions about the company’s actors which we had seen wandering about in the town. Friday looked like a wedge between me and my enjoyment, and Saturday was all activity. I went to my friend half a dozen times to see if he was in good trim. At the last moment I found that I had lost my stud. Then something else was missing, then I smashed a cup and a glass, in short my

excitement nearly created a mess I did not take any meal that evening, the confectionery outside the theatre had a greater charm

We reached the place at half-past eight The string of blue, green and golden lights was visible from a distance, and the screeching sound of the 'advertisement band' greeted us at the theatre-gate An Indian theatre is half fair, half social, and a good many other things besides It is a place where you meet friends,—that is why I was there an hour before the time of performance. In the dozens of shops that surround the building you can have excellent meals—picturesque if expensive restaurants for entertaining parties Inside the hall you have songs and dances and quarrels and merriment,—indeed everything except drama All this is taken for granted, people go to a theatre for a number of reasons, of which seeing a good play is seldom any That is one of the reasons why the Indian stage is in such a deplorable state All these things I discovered for myself once again as I stood musing before the clattering tinges of this improvised theatre However, I myself had come for fun, so I refused to meditate on art and again got mixed in the crowd.

What a fascinating assemblage of men it was! Sleek students like myself, fat and foxy clerks of the court, rich and pot-bellied merchants strutting about in pump-shoes and flowing shirts of silk; lean school-masters looking round to discover if there were any pupils who had forgotten to pay them their homage,

a rich money-lender with his under-sized apology of a child, on whom, nevertheless, he had appointed two formidable, oily, well-shaved, ex-wrestlers to wait, some dandys and disreputables, a few ostlers and flunkeys who were carrying enormous *lathis* with them, a handful of meek villagers who had already taken their seats as groundlings,—here was a motley crowd, as picturesque and interesting as any you could find in the world

Soon there was the first bell and we began to stream in. The theatre was fairly full and there was such a noise that you had to shout in order to make yourself heard to the third man from you. I had not been in my seat for five minutes, when there was such an outburst of activity in the four-anna class I felt it might result in a murder or two. Constables were presently on the spot, the theatre-officials were in a flurry; no one knew what it was all about, only, a quarrel had started in which half the spectators were soon involved. Fifteen minutes later when the question had been settled, it was found out that nothing more fateful but this had happened,—one of the groundlings was counting his money when he dropped a pice, to pick up which he should really have asked his neighbour to move, but being too proud to make the request he just pushed him aside. That man toppled over others who pushed him back and so on from one to the other until the whole stall was compelled to take part in the scuffle, and I saw later that two skulls had been fairly broke open to

ON GOING TO SEE A PLAY

the winds of heaven The man who had lost his pice, however, never got it back, and throughout the play we heard angry snarls or half-articulated abuse of one party to another, all which would have certainly restarted the quarrel at least half a dozen times had not the policemen stationed at the spot discharged their duties efficiently.

At ten there was the third bell, although the play should have begun an hour earlier The harmonium-master was unfortunately a minute too late, so that as the curtain went up and the assembled actors began the inevitable 'prayer,' they suddenly found that they were singing to the accompaniment of the *tabla* only, and almost stood aghast, when the agonized musician ran out of the wing and jumped into his seat Thence forward all went well The 'prayer' was encored So also were several of the songs, which came swiftly on in an irrelevant profusion It must, however, be said that they were pretty spirited, and among other things, had a very soothing effect on the irritated groundlings

We soon discovered that the title of the play had no connection whatever with the plot, which was sorry stuff, and was an old and tiring variation on the age-old theme of gambling The 'comic' was very lively and although I had seen a dozen washer-women being thrashed by their husbands before, I confess I was not tired at this thirteenth repetition God knows how many beatings the washermen of India deserve! There was also a Choubey of Mathura in

the piece, but as luck would have it, a child began crying in the women's section at the time when he was enlarging on his gastronomic achievements.

When the play came to an end at 3. A M I had enjoyed as much fun as I expected, and also an hour's sleep which I had not foreseen.

On being a Postman

Next to getting letters yourself, nothing could be finer than to bring letters to others. That is the postman's office and his privilege. Tired with the sad task of reading interminable books, my heart goes out to him in a longing for mild adventure, as, scarlet-turbaned and stick in hand, he passes before my door on his daily rounds through the winding streets of the city. If I were to start life on my own, I feel I could begin as a postman, and keep one a long time.

For look at it,—he comes like the messenger of fate, doling out joy and pain, good news and bad, with a calm serenity. Nothing is too great or too small for him. With perfect unconcern he will deliver to you the 'notice' of a desperate creditor, the invitation to a marriage feast, or the grateful acknowledgement of a trifling charity. He scores a point over 'the messenger of fate' inasmuch as you fairly know the time of his call. You are expecting a money-order; you predict that you would get it at ten o'clock, and pat at the hour, there appears the brown uniform and the red turban, and the good old pen sticking out over the right ear, rusty and ink-stained. You feel a sense of personal gratitude, for the moment you forget that there are such things as post-offices and trains and a complicated system of ledgers and cash-books.

and what not that has enabled you to get the money you wanted so soon, you feel as though the postman was a special messenger running post-haste from your friend and now safely delivering this moiety of cash which had been entrusted to his care. Are you expecting a love-letter? There he is again,—Cupid's messenger, O, sweet messenger of love, kindest of men on earth. Perhaps there is no statistics of the ages which postmen attain, but if blessings could prolong a man's life, surely the blessings of separated lovers whom a postman re-unites in a bond of letters, must ensure him a long lease. How soon he knows about it all! The address written in a suspiciously feminine hand, and the same hand repeated in your letters with a definite regularity, and he can put two and two together. He does not need to notice the suppressed excitement of your face, as one day he chances to give you the letter personally. He knows about it, knows that you are in love, also, thanks to the post-mark, that your beloved lives at Allahabad. Six months later, as the summer begins, he notices that the feminine hand is now sending its message from the heights of Simla, and, when, in a few weeks' time, he brings to your home a letter from Simla in your hand-writing, he knows, or imaginatively concludes, in what a paradise of bliss you would now be. For these and many such things in your life there are clues for him to infer from, so that however coy or secretive you appear to others, there is at least one mysterious being who knows a good few things about you. And

not about you only; he knows about me too, and about a dozen others who live within his beat. This is the romance of his life

Now there are two ways of delivering letters, the old and the picturesque one, generally practised in India, when the postman comes and gives a loud call or calls at your gate and delivers the letter only in the hand of a responsible person, and the modern, the prosaic and the unobstrusive way in which you either cut a hole in your door for letters to be dropped in, or hang a miniature pillar-box in the entrance to serve as a receptacle for your correspondence. In the latter case the human touch is lost, you have asked your servant to clear *your own* pillar-box at particular hours and you get your letters on your breakfast or your office table. This is the accepted method in Europe. The postmen of the West, therefore, are less romantic creatures

But there is one contingency in which the Western method is entirely to be preferred. So long as an envelope or the face of a post-card does not bear any obvious mark of its content, the postman-sage can deliver it with equanimity. But in India, people are so improvident that in the case of an obituary message they either mutilate it a little, or otherwise leave upon it a tell-tale mark. Luckily I have not yet received a communication of this evil nature from the hands of a postman, but I wonder if a lump rises in his throat as he calls out the name of the addressee to whom the fatal message is to be delivered. Such

mournful tidings had best be left in the door-way silently.

Apart from this exceptional situation, all else is full of fun and adventure. The postman gets up early in the morning, puts on his uniform, trusses his puttees like a Field-Marshal, slings the bag across his shoulder, and with a knob-kerry in hand saunters out to the City post-office. There, along with his other comrades-in-arms he takes his seat in a scarlet van, and presently the team is driven to the Central post-office. They go inside the building and for two hours are probably busy in sorting letters. The mysteries of this ritual, alas, are quite unknown to me. However, they all come out laden with a rich harvest of letters and parcels, once again solemnly take their seats in the van and are driven back to the city. Here, the team is broken up for the day and disperses in all directions, but before going on their several rounds, every one of them arranges his mail in the order in which he will pass the houses. The postman coming our way balances the letters in one hand, and for well-aimed blows his stick in the other, both of which he has to deliver with an equal dexterity, nor indeed can he deal out one, unless he has soundly dealt with the other,—the dogs in our street raising such a hell at the sight of his flaming turban. Sometimes the canine forces of the quarter prove too much for this lonely hero, when we come out to his rescue, and he swears he would never again bring letters to this "cursed street." However, one of us

gives him an anna or two, and this worsted messenger of happiness and dole regains his self-possession. So he goes on till mid-day, when his leather case gets empty, now to be employed for purposes for which it was never intended. He goes to the market and stuffs it with fresh garlic to season his meals, and a bunch of mulberry-fruit for his children's delight. This would conclude the day's work, unless a spot more was to be done in the afternoon. In the evening he comes out in civilian clothes, and I have never seen a more damaging change in my life. This imposing and be-putteed man of the morning, who could almost be said to have worn the livery of Fate, now appears lean and shrunken, a mere shadow of his former self. I do not know what monarchs look like when shorn of their tiaras and rich array, but on a lower scale he gives me the idea. Nevertheless, it is consoling to know that the next morning will restore him to his glory again.

This, together with gratuities on festive occasions from those he has so impartially served, roughly represents the life of a postman in the city. But who shall describe the importance of his position in a village? There, his weekly or bi-weekly visits are matters of profound social concern. He might easily be the most learned of them all; they look up to him as to a personage, he is the postman as well as their calendar of information. He might have to read their letters for them, and if anybody wishes to get one written he must give him his meals and perhaps

a night's shelter The whole village pays him the homage due to a *lettered* person.

All this is very romantic and perfectly true; only, alas, it is not the whole truth. It does not say, for instance, what the postman himself thinks of the job as he comes back home at mid-day, having weathered the dusty and scorching winds of June

The Ice-Cream Vendor

In the sweltering heat of a summer afternoon, no street-cry comes sweeter than that of the man who sells ice-cream. Braving the storms of dust and unmindful of the blazing sun, he sets out to vend his cooling ices,—an act that has more of grace than of business in it. Our comfort and money weighed against his profit and inconvenience would convince us that we rest by far his debtor.

The ice-cream vendors are of two kinds. There is the meaner sort who wrap up their commodity in scraps of matting, tie it round with a thick cord, and place the cylinder in a wooden box, in which also they place their weights and weighing scales, and a mean supply of green leaves, on which they give you a pinch of their ices and wish you to swallow it down. Miserable creatures, as though this were the way to sell one of God's own sweets on earth, as though there were not already too much weighing and careful distribution of pleasure and pain in human life that ice-cream also should be judiciously ticked off in a pair of balances! Banish me such catiffs into a wilderness, the slave who weighs ices and makes them more or less, is not fit to deal with civilized people. As it is, this sort of vendor drives only a petty trade, his custom being confined to children. The educated conscience of the world, of the artists at any rate,

refuses to be stingy in the consumption of this delicacy

There is another sort, the real Ice-cream Vendors. They have existed a long time and the secrets of the trade have gone into their blood. They flavour their article a little differently from others, each has his own trick of freezing the sweet little glasses of cream. They do not commit the sacrilege of weighing and dividing, they give you the glass whole and entire. They do not confine it within a cramping wooden chest either, they give it the rotund roominess of a large earthen pitcher, and keep as its neighbour the broken slices of salt and ice. They venerate their craft with a proper respect, not for them the carrying of an ice-cream box under a perspiring arm-pit, they have an assistant on whose head (mark the exalted position) they place a huge wicker-basket, in the midst of which stands this lordly pitcher, neatly covered with a lid and tied over with a towel not too clean, while on the basket's edge perch, in solemn order ranged, on one side the earthen dishes in which the ice-cream is to be served, and on the other, the emptied glasses,—sad reminders, if you are a party, of how far the contents of the pitcher have been consumed.

One such priest of the mystery advances towards me,—look at his luminous person, lit up by the joy of having secured an unresisting victim. '*Buraf rubri ka*', he says, to attract my wandering attention, and as he pronounces the magical phrase, his voice

rises in a tremolo, to drop into a soft and alluring stave as he pronounces the last syllable. He puts the creaminess of all the ices he has ever prepared into this brief cry, and as he shoots at me a meaning smile and bows down to salute, he reveals a shock of black and glossy hair cut into a straight line just above the nape. The weary assistant trudges behind. They reach my verandah, the vendor takes down the basket and places it on the floor, himself squats down, the servant stands apart, and now the incantation begins. The vendor half-closes his eyes, curls his lips into a luscious curve as though he was already enjoying the taste of the cream he was going to describe, and (grandson of Autolycus, I say to myself) begins, "What will my master have today, what will my lord? For I have creams here, of all kinds, my master, though I know the one will suit you; orange creams, guava creams, *kasein* creams, pistachio, my lordling,—that's for you—, almonds, mixed, full—cream, half—cream, creamy—creamy, milky—milky,—what will my master?" And before me had been rising visions all the while, and my mouth,—why not confess it?—was watering incontinently. I count the coins in my pocket, but desire will not be resisted, and I call out for 'Pistachio.' "O, my dear master, O my master, I knew *that* was for you," and throwing a severe glance and a curse at the attendant, "Hither rascal, dost thou not hear?—My lord has asked for a Pistachio, and takest thou no heed to clean the earthen dish? About,"—he plunges his hand deep into the icy

pitcher, and mutters in the tone of a lullaby, "Pistachio, Pistachio, for my master, Pistachio, come out Pistachio," but while you stand surprised at the witchery of the fingers that could so single out an object from a mixed heap, out comes Pistachio, is hurriedly concealed in the towel and wiped, flashes up the enormous knife and gently takes off the kneaded flour that joins the lid to the glass. Although the operation is gentle enough, it is accompanied by facial contortions that give it a proper solemnity. You feel you are witnessing the throes of a great birth. And you will not be far wrong, for just as you cannot say whether a conception will result in a boy or a girl, you cannot say with certainty whether a particular glass, as it is being given vigorous rollings in the hand before being poured out on a plate, will be glass half, whole, or mutilated. There is all the thrill of a discovery in it, and an appreciable element of chance, for these pairings are not like the base divisions of the inferior vendor. At length, the ceremony concluded, Pistachio goes down. But Pistachio is followed by another, and yet another, and a little later the calls of Almond and Orange become irresistible. Sorcery shall I call it, or art? But I have consumed a dozen glasses with keen relish and uneconomic tranquillity. When the time for reckoning comes I learn with alarm that I have to pay a neat fiver. For this also is part of the ice-cream vendor's art. Any glass that costs four annas to those prosaic persons who enquire the price before they let him use his opening

THE ICE-CREAM VENDOR

knife, costs "My master" just the double, because "My master" cares for pleasure and not for price. You must pay for the ice-cream as well as for the sauce of delightful eloquence. I am soon reconciled to the charge, because I would see the dignity of the art maintained, and woe unto the day when any vendor with the pitcher changes it for the wooden casket! My man goes his way satisfied, both with the skill of his forefathers as with his own loquacity. Thin and thinner comes the tremulous note of "*Bunaf rabri ka*" as his glossy hair becomes a diminishing spot in the distance. O, I wish he would visit me soon again.

long life so unmindful of your extensive family. If you deny them you are branded as a churl, and with the lottery of money, you also earn the lottery of an unmerited ill-name. If you grant their requests,—and this, in your mood of unexpected happiness is much more likely,—you are out of your money even before you come into it, and a nebulous heap of cousins removed to a degree is all that remains of your felicity.

No, I definitely will not have it. I will not have any visitors the day I hear of my good fortune. For after all, it is not very often in a lifetime that you get lotteries, and there is every reason why such occasions should be properly solemnized. An irrational and unheeding goddess has smiled upon you, you are given the chance of your life,—let your imagination work, for here are means to realize all but its wildest schemes.

Only fools give money to charities when they come by it through a lottery. It is difficult to guess the meaning of God in any particular act, but it is fairly obvious that if He had preferred those charities to benefit from the deal, He would not have placed the money in your hands. That you have been singled out of a multitude of others, equally good and deserving perhaps, shows unmistakably the trend of divine Intention.

The point is rather, will one lottery suffice? For he must be niggardly of desire indeed whose wishes could be circumscribed by just one of these

providential windfalls. My own ambitions range illimitable. To those who are poor in material things, there are still left the pleasures of imagination. It may be, perhaps, that in the ultimate analysis, the latter, because insubstantial, prove to be the only reality. Wealth is now here, now there, and lo, it is gone. The mind remains, the mind which joyed at the income of a lottery has also to face the prospect of vanished riches. The dreamer builds cloud-castles again and hopes that one day another stroke of fortune may enable him to translate some at least of his visions into the solid gravel of life.

But while I have a chance, let me make my choice. Out of the heaps of ambitions I would like to realize, let me choose those which this amount renders possible. Now is the cutting of the coat according to the cloth. Here, then, lie Rs 4,00,000, and here the inventory. Item, a most beautiful villa on the coastal mountains of Italy facing the Mediterranean, or in a little island of Greece, or on the tops of the Himalayas, no matter which. This for my summer residence, and for winter a comfortable house, say, at Lucknow. The house at Lucknow will be my permanent home. Attached to this will be a luxurious garden with an abundance of fruits and flowers. There will be a Rose Alley and a Jasmine Lane, and shady arbours surrounded by trees whose perfume is intoxicating at night. At all convenient spots in my garden there will be marble replicas of Grecian statuary, as within the house there will be

copies of the busts of all the great poets and thinkers of the world. There will also be a picture-gallery in which I will hang copies of the immortal works of Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Titian, Tintoretto, Rembrandt, Velasquez and the Indian painters of the Moghul school. These in particular, but there will be many other masters besides. The art of Persia will be represented, there will be Japanese lacquer-work and etchings, Chinese pottery, Flemish tapestries, and perhaps an ikon from Russia. For music, O if there is money enough I will maintain a string quartet, early in the morning and late at night I will hear the divine compositions of Mozart and Beethoven, Bach and Berlioz, Schubert and de Bussy. My library will consist of two kinds of books,—books written by poets and other great literary artists, and books written by eccentrics, books that are queer in one way or another. There is a peculiar delight in tracing the workings of unusual minds, and an eccentric is as unusual in his way as a poet or a dramatist in another.

My house,—or should I call it a mansion?—will be open to all sincere students of the arts, my library at the service of all lovers of literature. That is, they could consult books on the spot, to lend out the volumes would be unthinkable.

I suppose three quarters of the prize-money will be enough to get together this assemblage; the remaining quarter will be deposited in a bank and, it is hoped, will suffice to yield me a decent competence for life.

I do not want the sensual luxuries of appetite, and the mere business of living does not cost a lot, although I am far from envisaging an ascetic existence. I only mean that, moderate needs satisfied, the remainder of my income will go to add to my treasures of art. My personal way of life will be the study of music and literature, the pen and the violin-bow will give expression to my thoughts, painting and statuary will thrill me by their colour and line. I do not covet immortality, nor will I practise the arts because I wish to be remembered ever afterwards. Art is not Life, and I go to the arts precisely because that is so. Men who are sick and sore and travel-toiled find in the sanctuary of the muses a refuge that is denied them in the beautifully terrifying world. Much may be endured in life if one is able to read the poets in the morning and play Beethoven in the afternoon. At least for some time, for in the long run, against a multitude of sorrows and the disfiguring of age, neither money nor art nor religion can offer consolations that avail.

In that case, would I very much care to win a lottery of four hundred thousands rupees, I wonder.

To travel second is to lose this dignified reserve. Your compartment is not comfortable enough for your money, and is too much crowded for your convenience. It is only an attempt at luxury or an apology for exclusiveness. All those little attentions which sweeten the lot of the first-class passenger are denied you. You have moderate comfort, indeed, but your companions are sullen and resent you as an unwelcome intrusion. Although you have paid equally with them for the seat, they all wish that you had best get down at the next convenient stop, and leave them the first class privacy they had hoped for on a second class ticket. There is something upstartish, something unabashedly selfish about them. They are the sort who wouldn't let you look at their paper even after they have finished it. They strut at the platform with an affected importance and lour at the porters who brush against them. Mingling with their betters while the train is stopping, their identity is revealed as soon as there is a whistle and a rush for the doors. Their smile denotes that they are travelling second and are happy about it. They never fail to accost even distant acquaintances at wayside stations, "Good morning, Ramdhan," they say, and wave him a hand, as much as to tell Ramdhan that he must not forget the class in which he has seen them travelling.

About the Intermediate there is neither dignity nor grace. It is a kind of expensive third minus its variegated charm. The plush of the seats is as old

and as dirty as the compartment itself, and there are no comforts at all. You would hesitate to do the unconventionalities of the lower class, and yet there is no recognized code of behaviour for you to fall back upon. If you want to respect the wishes of your fellow-passengers, as you must, you know not what you have to do; whether, for instance, you could take out and munch down your *puris* in the face of two Anglo-Indians who are sitting opposite, or whether you should share them, as is the custom, with the other, half-serious and but partially reserved passengers in the compartment. Almost invariably you are thrown in the company of Railway officials,—the *Babus*—who have these days pretty nearly monopolized this class for themselves. Instead of the decorous silence of the higher classes and the picturesque cackle of the lower, you are condemned to hear shop all the time. You cannot stretch yourself at ease as this is considered to be stretching your privilege too far. You may neither sing nor laugh aloud because you are afraid to disturb that spectacled person in the corner. You are surrounded by those who are travelling free of charge under the patronage of the Guard or the Travelling Ticket-Inspectors. If you have any sense of justice you always keep chafing against the iniquity which made *you* pay a certain sum for your ticket. You look upon these “free birds” with scorn and never miss the opportunity of giving them a mild kick in the legs if they are improvident enough to place them across the benches,—the devils! The Ticket

Inspector would come to your class every now and then, and rest there awhile between visiting one compartment and another. Intermediate only in name, this really is the worst kind of accommodation on a train.

As I am unable to travel first and disdain to use the other two classes, it is both by preference and necessity that I go third. And wherever possible, I travel R & K R, because I wish to enjoy the provincial humours, and because while travelling I like to have, as nearly as it can be obtained, the atmosphere of the old country about me. The R & K R usually runs at a speed of about ten miles an hour, very often it stops unaccountably somewhere before a station,—then flags are waved, whistles blown, signals let down, but nothing seems to produce a great impression, the only response the engine makes to the manipulations of the furious driver is to let off a little vapour at the top, or a little water at the sides, indeed it is not before a good fifteen minutes that the wheels are set a-jogging again. All which affords a merry topic of discussion to my fellow-passengers. Indeed we call it a sublimated bullock-cart, and considering both its speed and the variety of people it carries, the description is fully applicable.

I, then, go third and travel R & K R. Like my companions I reach the station half an hour before the scheduled time of departure, because as they say,—Is there any guarantee that the train will not leave earlier? I admire the sound common-sense

of the principle, for if you have to catch a train, it is good to take all the necessary precautions about it. Moreover it is great fun. You reach the station and you spread your bedding on the platform, if the train starts from the place, you go and lie in the compartment. Then you have a good look-round and judge the type of persons who are to travel with you. You taste of the station sweets or you start a conversation. Soon your reverie is broken by the toll of an enormous bell across the yard,—the line is clear. You gather up your baggage hurriedly; curse and call the porter, and peep in the distance for a spot of smoke which is your train. You wait for another ten minutes when the train does arrive, and, like the disturbed sheep in a fold, people run in all directions. "Here, here," you say to your porter, "no, let us go further," and you run ahead, while your man goes in the opposite direction and from a distance shouts out to you,—"*Hither Babuji*, I have found a place", you turn round and run, a bundle in your arm and a stick in hand,—knocking down a villager who is running counter to you. As he carries a big *lathi* he gives you the chase for a few paces, then gives up, and seeks accommodation for himself. You are seated at last.

Attempting to travel third you have already enjoyed delightful experiences. But there are more. By pushing and by insinuation you have found yourself a place. Then you stretch your legs a little, take down your box and put it on the berth, saying that you can't leave it out of sight,—so that in the end

you have made yourself quite comfortable. Then you set out to make friends. You choose the likely persons, approach them one by one, and as they themselves are eager to know others, the walls of reserve get broken all too soon. You ask them to come round to your seat, you take out your *puris*, the others bring in their shares, and a feast is improvised. Entertainments of a different sort are not lacking. That group of villagers in the corner is already busy passing scandal, presently a musical beggar enters and pounds on his harmonium,—sometimes, it turns out, to your annoyance, sometimes, when you are in the humour, to your satisfaction. He collects money in the name of some charity,—an institution for cows, for instance, but the sum he gets is never large, and is never meant for any pocket other than his own. Close on his heels comes the loquacious vendor of a hundred articles; his harangue is interesting in the beginning,—the preface being the best—but soon it grows tiresome, specially if the run between two stops is long, and it is pathetic to watch how he brings his prices down to a sixth of the original proposal as the train nears the station. Then some one from among us starts his own singing. *Chillums* had been passing round, I distribute cigarettes,—we are a jocund company, and have established a bond of sympathetic interest between ourselves. We go to sleep by turns and ask the others to keep watch over the luggage. We get up at the stations, because those who get down have a distressing weakness of forgetting the number of

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baggages they brought with them, and are often in the habit of carrying away a few more. We gather round the entrance and prevent others from coming in, there is always a scrummage. At night, if we are sleeping on the berths, we refuse, in the beginning at least, to contract our legs to make room for a new-comer, if he is a powerful one, he just pushes us over and we acquiesce, if he is meek, he squats on the floor. The Ticket Checker's arrival is always an event. With a surprising quickness, quarter is given to all concerned, there is some concealment of the luggage, and our curiosity is on edge to find out the dare-devil who had been travelling without a ticket and who will now be ejected. No third class compartment is lacking in such a one. We have had our shrewd suspicions; do they turn out right? They do! We are sorry for the wretch, but all is quiet again. We have been travelling for ten hours. Thrown about in strange company, we soon found ourselves at home with them. Friendships were made without effort, but they will not be broken without regret. We have had great fun and some hardship together. Over the east dawn is breaking, and the rays of the sun cover in a golden mist the fair city to which we go. As the whistle of the train violates the surrounding stillness we arrange our luggage, and our hearts are heavy. Soon we shall have to part from the others, and, alas, may never meet them again.

Trips and Tours

There is a picture by Millais called "The Boyhood of Raleigh" in which we are shown Raleigh and another boy sitting on the shore of a deep blue sea, and beside them a huge and weather-beaten sailor telling tales of his maritime adventures and with his enormous arm pointing to the distant beyond. There is a look of such curiosity and determination on Raleigh's face one can almost feel in him the future navigator of the globe.

Whether or not the story painted in this picture be true, it is undeniable that imagination plays a great part in the life of a man. Perhaps no body ever attained greatness unless he had a strong imagination and the necessary strength of will to realize his dreams. Even in an ordinary life, in business or in practical affairs, it is the man with an idea who wins the race. The training of the intellect is, of course, necessary, but among equally trained intellects, the superiority will lie with the person who has the faculty to see beyond his fellows. The training of the intellect itself becomes easier when imagination lends its help to the task. The acceptance of this fact has brought about extensive changes in the method of education. There is no more the cramming of those dry-as-dust text-books of history or geography; history is now treated as "the story of mankind", geography as "the

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story of the earth", earth, the home of the human species. Science has its own tales, the rigours of mathematics itself are now considerably mitigated. Just as well that it is so, for the mind of a child thinks in terms of pictures and knowledge so presented, sinks in easily.

In this great task of training the imagination, trips and tours play an important part. A subject taught in the narrow confines of a class-room is one thing and quite another when instruction is given under the broad and open skies at a place far removed from the school. Curiously enough the human mind digests new knowledge much more easily when it is disguised under fun or excitement than when it is presented for what it is. We have to lure the mental faculties with a sugared pill. As soon as the teacher tells his class that they will visit the zoo, the minds of the students naturally begin to dwell on the amusement that is likely to come, they do not care if the scene is laid for giving them a knowledge of the vertebrates and the invertebrates. But under the excitement of the event they will gladly assimilate the information, and retain it longer than if they had come by it in a class-room. The same is true of trips of a different kind. A knowledge of plants and trees had best be given in a botanical garden. History becomes alive when the historical spots themselves have been visited. What a procession of forgotten kings and noblemen passes before the mental eye as one watches the ruins of old Delhi lying around the *Kutub Minar*?

To see the deserted but perfectly preserved palaces of the Moghuls at Agra is to get a more vivid impression of the life of those times than could have been given in a dozen lectures in the class-room. It is obvious that not all historical spots could be visited by large numbers of students, but some at least should be. Visits to a local museum when there is one, are extremely helpful. It is difficult to lecture to young students on sculpture or architecture or painting or the biological remains of pre-historic times, but when they see these things, they can understand them as much as they are capable of at that age.

So much for the importance of trips and tours in the education of the young, but they do not lose their value as the young grow old. Instead of being organized by the teachers, these tours should now be organized by the youths themselves. No better method of spending the vacations could be imagined than that the students should band together in small parties and visit places of interest, distant or near. These days when the Railway Companies allow concessions, want of money should not be pleaded as an excuse for staying at home. And what even if there is no money? Most of the students have push-bikes, why not arrange cycle tours? Why not just walk on the road and enjoy the country-side? There is no greater fun than being on the road, careless and free, and in the company of one's intimate friends. And the delights of cooking one's meals in a field or by the side of a soft and winding river! And those

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gentle sleeps under tranquil skies beneath twinkling stars, or, in winter, in the cosy straw-bed of a hospitable villager, in a tiny hamlet half-forgotten of the world! Let alone the moral advantages of these trips, such as the fostering of self-reliance and resourcefulness, the delight itself is too great to be foregone. The sheer joy of an unworried and unthinking existence,—the mood of passivity in which you just take in the impressions as they come, feeling too idle to subject them to the mind, ‘vegetating’, in short, as Hazlitt liked to do when he was in the country,—who would not spend a part of his life gathering such felicity?

But you might not go on a tour for the mere delight of it, as instruction was joined to pleasure for the young, to pleasure you might join exercise, even profit sometimes. Mountaineering is an instance to point. The thrill of climbing a peak is like getting a first class in a difficult examination. In the mountains nature is seen in all her gorgeousness, and the change from a life in the plains is delightfully refreshing. A trip on the sea is an experience of a very different kind. Between the dark blue waters and the light blue sky, you get a feeling of the wideness of the world which you hardly experience elsewhere, unless it were in the heart of a big desert, although even there the feeling is not quite the same.

In some of the European countries,—in Germany and England, for instance, there is almost a craze for tours and holiday-making. Perhaps it is a natural

reaction from a busy and a hurried life, and life spent in the dirt of the towns. It may be doubted whether a week of holidays on the sea-side does not actually make the year-long life of a Londoner appear more miserable by contrast. But there are some associations like those for 'hiking' in Germany, and the 'Youth Hostels' in England which are extremely salutary. 'Hiking' is nothing more than walking-trips by parties of young men and women to either mountains or other places of interest. Knapsacks, which contain a few clothes and the ordinary morning necessities, slung across their backs, stick in hand, these stalwart people go marching across the country, healthy and smiling. There is a chain of 'hostels,' or *sejais* dotted all over the country-side where these people can get their night's shelter for a nominal charge. They can also have the use of cooking utensils at these places if they like. If a man has enthusiasm and courage, poverty need not prevent him from seeing his own country. What a contrast from the way people spend their vacations in India? The holidays in summer are a signal for a three months' idle staying at home. Granted that the heat in the plains is too awful for any such ventures, how many of our youths march up to the hills? Compared with Germany and England, India is indeed a big country, even so, it is a little pitiful to reflect that many of those who live in the northern plains die without having caught a glimpse of the sea. Surely it is not all due to lack of money; as a nation we have seldom given proof of our

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being extraordinarily enterprising.

In the sixteenth century, the education of an Englishman was not complete unless he had made a 'Grand Tour' of the European continent. Much can still be said for that ideal. Recently the League of Nations organized for a number of young Indians a tour over most of the countries of Europe, and with the numerous concessions they were able to obtain it came off exceedingly cheap. Nothing could contribute more for a surer foundation of international peace and good-will than these visits by the youths of one nation to the country of another. When the fast means of communication have amazingly shortened distances, it seems such a pity that good old India should still be so much stay-at-home. And it is a greater pity that people live all their lives without having even a shadowy idea of half the glories of God's earth.

The place of Cinema in Education

The task of education is to impart knowledge, and knowledge is gained through the senses. The ears, the eyes, the nose and the mouth all bring their quota of information to the human mind. Each sense plays a distinctive part in our experience, but the eye is the most retentive and observant of them all. The old saying that seeing is believing has a large amount of truth in it. In order to understand the world, the first step is obviously to "take it in."

The importance of visual methods in education was recognized ages ago. In the dim past of our national history, when the Indian sages instructed their pupils on the bank of a river, they must have made drawings in sand to explain the difficult points of a lesson. Since then black-boards have been used, our text-books are illustrated, there are art-galleries and museums,—these being nothing but visual aids in the process of acquiring knowledge.

With the invention of photography we had an efficient tool to solve the old need, and from photography grew the stereoscope and the lantern-slide which are in use even to this day. But the slides represented life still, and were also a little crude in technique. Marvellous in their own way and for their time, they did not give the thrill that comes from watching the reality,—moving and alive. Also, the

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technical range of the camera was limited; life under water, for instance, had not then yielded its secret to the sensitive plate

The motion picture, however, made possible the presentation of a whole new world of mystery and wonder. What had so far but feebly roused the mind or hardly impressed it at all was now given a new significance. The miracles of nature, the beauty of distant lands and peoples, the dangerous thrills of adventure, life in the wilds of Congo or in the snow-swept plains of Siberia, the grandeur of Everest or the crowds at Daytona, which could only be vaguely realized before, were now a vivid reality to our senses.

Educationists, therefore, quickly seized upon the possibilities of the cinema, and we have come to a stage when many of the schools in England and most of those in America use the motion picture for one purpose or another. There are firms which prepare special educational films, so that almost any subject could be taught by means of pictures, although, naturally, some subjects lend themselves more and some less to this kind of treatment. There are societies and associations which study the problems of education by means of the cinema, there is even an international board for this purpose, and of books and journals and reports on the topic there is no end. The film has definitely taken its place as a powerful medium of instruction.

As to its utility, opinion is still slightly divided, but there are not many who seriously contend that it

should be dethroned from its position of importance in the educational curriculum. The old argument that cinema causes excessive eye-strain is shown to be invalid, for the eye-strain of those days was the result of faulty projection or, alternatively, was due to the use of worn-out films. With improved technique and a proper knowledge of the machine this risk is eliminated. Similarly, there is little force in the statement that the use of cinema to illustrate a point during the course of a lesson causes distraction, with the result that the student learns neither from the one nor from the other. As a matter of fact, students listen to their teachers very carefully when they are told that the pictorial representation of the object will be the reward of their studious attention. The film clarifies difficulties, and does not confuse the mind.

However, there is one set of serious charges against the use of cinema in education, specially as it is used in America. The Americans, it might be noted, possess a genius for carrying things to the extreme, so that having discovered the importance of films in schools, there is hardly any subject they would not teach this way. Thus they turned their attention to translating history, literature and the Bible through the silver screen. Now every well-educated man is supposed to know a few plays of Shakespeare, a few novels of Dickens, and a little of Homer and the classical literature, they, therefore, filmed *Hamlet* and *King Lear*, *Othello* and *Oliver Twist*, parts of

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Homer, scenes from the Bible and numerous other things of the kind. If a boy sees the film-version of a particular play, the desire to read it is not particularly strong, specially if the play happens to be difficult, and there is no motive either, because for ordinary purposes the story is known to him. But in literature a plot or a tale is not generally the strongest point, and the screen cannot convey the linguistic beauty of a piece. Hostile criticism is, therefore, levelled against such films, and is often extended in its sweep. It is said that films reduce reading and so destroy the sense of literature. They tend to make the imagination dull, and substitute entertainment for study. By easing the task of acquiring knowledge, they produce superficial thinkers; by replacing a passive acceptance of learning for an active effort, they promote an intellectual imbecility.

While recognizing the partial justice of some of these observations, it must be remarked that the above criticism holds good only if we make the films our sole means of instruction. That indeed would produce all kinds of mental sluggards,—men in whom the very faculty of thought would slowly fust unused. But we only advocate the use of films to visualize what has been taught already. That fixes the impression in the mind more clearly and for a longer duration than the clearest analysis of the most persuasive school-master. Literature, however, is not a subject that could be taught through the screen, but there are several others which not only are very much

suited for this medium, but for which no better method could have been invented. Geography and geology are instances to point. Unlike anything else, the cinema can recreate the past. By means of models and animated drawings, we can prepare a film of the formation of mountains and canyons, of how the strata of the earth's surface came into their present form; we can move a miniature heavens to order, and teach the elementary facts about the planets with clarity and delight. The contemporary world is, of course, easily caught by the camera's eye, and films tell us about the manners of a people which no textbook on geography could even effectively describe. For teaching biology, physics, chemistry, the manufacture of metals, hygiene and nature-study,—at least in all their elementary stages, and in some cases even when the course is advanced, the films are an admirable means of instruction. In remote and outlying parts of the country where there are no zoos or factories or museums to visit, they may be the only means of instruction, and in some cases even in cities they are absolutely indispensable. Slow-motion photography has made it possible to analyse the movement of things, we can now see and study a slowly travelling projectile, the very slow and otherwise imperceptible opening of flowers, and the various movements of a fish's body, in river or in sea. We can mark on the screen the circulation of blood and the passage of an electric current through the wirings of an electric motor. It is not possible for many to watch

THE PLACE OF CINEMA IN EDUCATION

complicated operations by eminent surgeons or to notice the gradual emergence of a dragon-fly from its chrysalis. But the films in the class-room have solved our difficulty, we can see these things again and again.

The cinema makes the abstract concrete, perhaps the easiest way to understand the theory of relativity would be to see a film of that name. By recreating the past, by magnifying the small and minimizing the great, by annihilating space and by capturing the rare, the cinema not only facilitates the difficult task of education,—it also enlarges the scope. The problem for the modern child is already formidable. There is so much to learn before he can even hope to understand the world in which he lives, and if the films make the process of acquiring knowledge delightfully easy, only one who is either a churl or over sixty and remembers his master's rods on the back can find reason to complain.

Science applied to Modern Agriculture

In the year 1898, Sir William Crookes predicted a world-wide famine unless radical changes were introduced in the existing system of agriculture. It is a mercy, thanks to the help of modern science, that his prophecy has not come true.

After a patient analysis of different soils and plant-tissues, the bio-chemists have been able to furnish invaluable data to the farmer. They have studied the vital processes of plants, and have learnt a variety of new facts about fungal and bacterial activities. All this knowledge has enabled us to manufacture chemical manures and insecticides. We have also learnt the necessity of rotating the crops.

This last, however, is not an altogether new discovery. Even before our time the cultivators recognized in a crude way that crops made some demands upon the soil for their nutriment. Modern science has merely traced the actual transformations and has given a new significance to such well-known sayings as "Nitrogen makes foliage", and "Phosphorus makes seeds."

The analysis of soil aims at determining the proportions of the various elements present in a given piece of land. It also investigates the question of plant-food 'availability', for although an element may be found in considerable quantities, it may not be in a condition fit for absorption. Science has

discovered the significance of limestone, for on it depend the texture of the soil, the fermentations, and the absence of fungoid diseases. By judging the nitrogen and humus content, the proportion of lime, the available potash and phosphoric acid, a scientist can know the present state of any particular kind of soil. After the analysis let the deficiencies be removed, and a waste land re-acquires its lost productivity.

Chemical fertilizers are a modern invention. In the natural vegetation of a forest or a prairie, the soil suffers little or no diminution of plant-food, for the elements that are abstracted soon come back when the plants decay. In agriculture, however, the produce of the land is consumed by men, who have to make the corresponding return through artificial manures. Of these the most widely used is the one which is gathered from the farmyard, consisting of the solid and liquid excrements of the stock, together with the straw employed as litter. Box-manure is better than a similar article prepared in the open fields. The importance of nitrogen for crops is now generally recognized, and it has been shown that increased carbon dioxide concentration of atmosphere leads to a luxurious growth. We manufacture phosphates from bones, and potash is obtained from the deposits at Stassfurt. Nitrogen is "fixed" chemically.

The destruction of crop by the insects and the fungi which our ancestors regarded as a divine visitation has now been considerably eliminated. The scientific control of disease is a matter of increasing

importance, because the development of international communications makes the spreading of plant pests a significant danger

To exterminate these pests two lines of attack are employed. We breed varieties of crops that resist disease, thus we have succeeded in obtaining a kind of wheat which the red rust cannot destroy. The cross-breeding of plants is of immense importance, because it gives us healthier and disease-resisting varieties. Hybridization and selection is the basis of modern genetical research.

During the seventeenth century attempts were made to kill fleas and caterpillars by brimstone, and the later ages used slaked lime, sulphur, powdered tobacco and petroleum for exterminating pests. Modern insecticides include poison sprays, contact insecticides and fumigants. Arsenic is the effective principle of most of these. It would be tedious to enumerate the various chemicals used for the purpose, but it might be remarked that dusting the crops by a powder from an aeroplane flying at a low altitude is one of the most successful means of killing the fleas.

Many diseases are transmitted by the seed,—some smuts and mildews, for example. Biochemistry has taught us the value of seed sterilization.

Metallurgy and agriculture seem rather far apart, and yet the automobile, the truck, the tractor and the mechanical thresher are all indispensable on a scientific agricultural farm.

Recently there have been experiments in light

control and the results are very encouraging. Artificial light, devoid of the injurious ultra-violet rays, has proved useful, and with cheaper electricity, it is possible that in future crops may be carefully regulated by selective artificial illumination.

All this, however, is a story of science applied to agriculture in the West. In the enormous farms of America, in the vast wheat-fields of Canada, the tilth of the soil is obtained with man and science working hand in hand or rather with science leading the team. In our own impoverished and god-forsaken country the cultivators are still yoked to their bullocks and to a method of work which might have been good enough in the first century of the Christian era. Perhaps no such great and predominantly agricultural country is so unscientific in the world. The hungry mouths look up and are not fed, while under our very feet the fertile forces of nature are sleeping, tied up in a spell which can be broken by scientific incantations. The first problem of every country is to feed and clothe its people; our young men go to the universities by the thousand, read the politer arts and swell the ranks of the unemployed. How many of even those who take up science turn it to a useful account? It is considered degrading to work on the soil. It seems we have not yet learnt enough, and that neither science nor abject poverty has succeeded in opening our eyes. We stay serenely where we have stayed for centuries, while biochemistry is turning the waste land of other countries into masses of gold.

On having a Favourite Author

A common enough question,—“Who is your favourite author?”—it is by no means an easy one to answer. Our friends ask it as well as the Civil Service Commissioners, but to reply to it justly we must have both a critical intellect and a proper literary taste. This is more difficult than it seems. Most of us are careless readers, we go through books hurriedly, because our aim is either to get familiar with the plot, or to substantiate a boast that we have read so many volumes by so many different people. Others merely read to improve their command over the language, to know the author is, with them, a secondary consideration. The few who do try to come at the core of a work discover that most great authors have something admirable about them. These, therefore, find that to single out one from a number of others as *the* favourite author is both invidious and difficult.

When we are young and our faculties are budding, we take a lively interest in the universe around us, and become fond of all those who awaken us to a sense of wonder and admiration. Dumas and Stevenson are almost universal favourites while we are at school. The young mind takes a keen delight in adventures and enchantments, in battles and piracy, in old castles and magic halls of revelry; that is why we all love Scott at a certain age. As

our intellects mature our tastes also change, and although the old favourites do not altogether lose their charm, it is very rarely that they retain the glowing affection they had originally excited. We gather fresh experience in life,—this might be so painful as to compel us to question the very purpose of human existence,—and we find that the graceful puerilities of the authors we had chosen to make our own little bestead us now when we want from literature some consolation and stay. That is why according to the variegated pattern of life our favourite authors are also changing. That is why we still keep up the search, and travel "tomorrow to fresh fields and pastures anew."

Because of this close connection between one's intellectual outlook and the author one particularly admires the question "who is your favourite author?" assumes a special meaning. If a person knows his mind and gives a truthful answer, it brings us, by a curious sideway, an intimate glimpse of his character. Of friends as well as of books, tell me the company a man keeps, and I will let you know a good deal about him. To publish the name of your favourite author is to give out much more than your individual likes and dislikes in literature. Though, perhaps, it might be added that one need not agree entirely with the view-point of an author before one is fond of him. A partial agreement of imaginative experience, some of which must be of an intimate nature, would suffice. We must feel that at a

particular point where we plumbed the depths of life, our favourite himself did so, with the difference that while we bore our cross patiently, he gave it, because he was able to, a sublime expression. We, mute poets in our grief, find in some lines the echo of sentiments which had been crying for an outlet in our souls and for which we could find neither a voice nor a name. We get them by heart and love the man who eased for us our unavailing smart. We admit him to our intimacies, use his words on occasions we call sacred,—in love, or in the reaving agony of death,—and sometimes even make him retraverse in our imagination the haunts he was used to while he was alive. He is our favourite poet.

The greater the emotional intensities in a man the less likely is he to have a single favourite. It is very improbable that two persons should have altogether and exactly similar experiences. To mate our sympathies completely, therefore, we need to have more than one writer whom we can consult and quote. The reason why Shakespeare is such an universal favourite is because he offers to the greatest number of people in a considerable variety of spiritual crises, the largest measure of emotional concordance. That a writer has retained the favour of generations of readers, is, in a way, a proof of his immortality as well as of his intrinsic excellence.

Personally I have a number of favourite writers and poets, some I like for their profundity, some because they are eccentric, and yet others for their

scrupulous art I have had favourites whose magic is lost upon me now, and I have no doubt I will have new ones in the future. A few great ones like Homer and Dante stand the test of time and of shifting tastes. For the lesser ones, now that I like Fielding, for instance, I wonder how I could ever have been so fond of Thackeray. O, I love Fielding. I do not think there has been another English novelist to approach him in his wide and certain knowledge of human nature. With surprising accuracy he grasped the motives which actuate men to work, and just while you had been carried away by the marvellous flow of the narrative and had forgotten all about them, by a subtle touch which gives you the idea of his genius Fielding makes you aware of the psychological state of his characters. *Tom Jones* is an epic in prose, and is written with rare internal truthfulness. As for its 'manners,' it gives us an unforgettable picture of the English society in the eighteenth century. That journey in a coach across . . . but I must desist, for once I begin talking about Fielding I will not know where to end. That really is the trouble about one's favourite writers. One knows their works, their private lives, their little eccentricities, their whims and caprices and mannerisms, even their dress and gait so well that one can hardly help being garrulous about them. However tiresome it might be to others, so far as we are concerned, the weakness is pardonable. For we regard our favourite authors

as we would an intimate friend, and we are obliged, for they have impartially sweetened by their company our hours of idleness, ennui or pain. Perhaps our obligation to them is greater, for while our intimate friends in the world stayed back for one reason or another, these never refused our invitation.

On Advertisements

Advertisement-writing is an art, as any one disposed to doubt the statement may find out for himself if given the task

A literary artist uses his word judiciously and finds out the unique expression which, better than others, conveys his idea. He can choose his own literary form. A sonnet might communicate his emotion, and if he has more to say, a longer lyric or an essay would serve the turn. He might choose the dramatic style or the epic, he might write a full-length novel,—he can afford to be prolix or obscure. If he can make his work interesting enough, he may be certain that readers will come back to it again and again. There is a peculiar thrill in understanding an author whose meaning is not obvious at sight, and it is likely that in the long run attention will centre round the man whose complicated emotions demanded a complicated expression.

To the advertisement-writer, however, there are no such facilities. He is an artist working under peculiar handicaps. The space at his disposal is always strictly limited, and his meaning must be clear as the day-light. He may not be learned, for people will not spend their time in understanding his allusions. He may not be vague, for a vague advertisement will hardly make impression. He must be persuasive, and

in order to work subtly on the minds of the future purchasers, should make a liberal use of the epigram. He must know the workings of mass psychology. In a very short space and in a few clear and forceful words he has to commend his wares to a public which generally does not very much care for them. He should be able to convince the people that they do really want the thing advertised, but have, for some unaccountable reason, so far withheld from making the purchase. It is obvious that not many are capable of such lucid and effective writing in brief, and equally clear that one who has the capacity is undeniably an artist.

Although advertisements of a sort could be found three hundred years back, the art of advertisement-writing, as we know it, is an outgrowth of democracy and the modern times. In the olden days, shop-keepers and manufacturers in the West established their credit by securing the patronage of the king and the nobility. "Perfumers to my Lord so-and-so," "Tailors to my Lord of such-and-such a place," "By appointment to His Majesty the King," were formulas which elevated the firms to which they were attached in the business hierarchy. The common people thought it a distinction to purchase their articles from shops which catered to a viscount or an earl. What trifles will satisfy the human vanity! However, snobbery in business is now over. Leaving the tag of His Majesty's patronage, others have gone out of use. In an age when the middle class is better

off than the old aristocracy, and in a limited way, a bank-clerk might buy as well as the best in the land, it would not pay to insist on social distinctions. Now-a-days advertisers frankly compliment the intelligence of the public and appeal to their good sense as friends and counsellors. "Dear sirs," they seem to say, "Dear sirs, we know that you are good citizens and respectable householders, so, by your leave, are we, and like you we too have the interest of the nation at heart. As man to man we may speak to you, even as a friend to another, and it so happens that in one particular direction we might even give you our advice. You certainly need a drop to cheer you up after dinner, and for various reasons we excel at the job of manufacturing drinks, as you, dear sirs, we are sure, excel at yours. It is in a spirit of camaraderie we beg to suggest that . . .," but all this like the prelude in a Browning poem is just left out, the implication is there, and the advertisement merely gives you the brief but pregnant assurance,—"*GUINNESS is good for you*" No snobbery here, no patronage either, rather the cheerful offer of an article which you are advised to buy, which if you refuse,—the fault is entirely yours. "*Ride a Raleigh*," "*Eat more fruit*,"—the same friendliness all round. Such comforting suggestions make you feel that you are not alone in the world; in a sense, you might say to yourself that the factories at Birmingham are working for your particular benefit, and it is for you that the teeming gardens of Africa export their yield. "*Eat more*"

fruit" At times it looks like a pathetic appeal. When every one else in the world is so obliging, you feel you would be a miserly wretch if you did not at least partially repay their liberality. "*Eat more fruit*" Why, of course. Two pounds of apples please, and half a dozen bananas, and,—yes, a dozen oranges also, please. Having given the order you feel a tremendous relief, as though a long-standing debt was discharged. That "*Eat more fruit*" which had been staring at you in streets and from hoardings, which peeped at you every now and then, and quite unexpectedly, from the grocer's windows, until at last it worked up all sorts of moods in you, speaking now with the voice of a grand-father and now with that of a creditor, now advising you like a physician, and now seeming to appeal like a friend,—the witchery of "*Eat more fruit*" comes to a short respite as you go out of your fruit-monger's shop with a basketful of dainties you had hardly wished to purchase when you came out shopping that morning.

This, then, is a modern advertisement, this the art. Simple,—it is only three words, effective, embodying several shades of meaning, full of suggestions, it works on your mind by repeatedly catching your attention in all manner of ways. The trick of repetition is a very fruitful one, and advertisers are not slow in exploiting it. That is why there is no likely space where you may not find the haunting voice of the importunate business man. In street corners, on hoardings, on shop-fronts, in business thorough-fares,

in newspapers, on railway-stations, in buses and trams and trains, in the country-side parallel to the railway lines, on wrappers and bags in which the shop-keeper gives you the things he has sold, in electrical signs, in mysterious toy-displays,—things that nod and grin eternally, and with a finger of caution point out to you the desirability of purchasing the goods offered in the shop-window,—everywhere, indeed, it is the business advertiser harassing the life of the modern man. Several firms adopt the unpleasant habit of sending personal letters of advertisement. If you are grim and refuse to see sideways or ahead when you are walking in the streets, if you are dexterous and avoid advertisements jammed between scraps of news in your morning paper (but, of course, you are neither so dexterous nor grim), you cannot help opening an envelope whose look is innocent, and which, for all you know, might contain a pleasant invitation for tea. Nothing is so exasperating as to find all one's morning mail consist of such tiresome advertisement-letters. But there is no help. Living in this era of machines and breathless competition, you simply cannot escape the evils of over-advertisement.

Two things are necessary. Firstly, the business man must capture your wandering and aimless attention. For this purpose have been invented all kinds of electrical devices,—signs that appear and disappear, and then appear again in various unexpected combinations, electric names that keep throbbing

the whole night through, as though some mysterious doctor kept supplying a disembodied nervous system with shocks of energy, sometimes there are even miniature electrical puppet-shows on shop-fronts that are large enough for the purpose. Having engaged the attention, the next thing is to say or rather illustrate the point in a manner that would fix it in your memory. Also to say and to illustrate it *ad nauseum*. It is then the spell begins to work. The knowledge that there are such and such things, manufactured by such and such people sinks in your mind, and in the moment of need a name suddenly presents itself to your attention. The more unusual your first acquaintance of the article, the longer is it likely to stay in your memory. The towns and the country-side had, therefore, been exploited for advertisements, though the heavens still retained their look of undisfigured blue. Recently, however, an ingenious gentleman, Major Savage by name, invented a device for sky-writing. On cloudy nights, —and in England very few nights are absolutely cloudless,—his machine would have scrawled across the heavens in an enormous script such consoling legends as EUTHYMOL or B P PLUS or LIPTON'S TEA. No one could help looking at this skyey display,—nor could one forget the name which had set the heavens ablaze. This form of advertisement would have beaten all others, though perhaps it might as well have defeated its purpose just now by exasperating people,—and there are a good many—who are still

old-fashioned enough to gaze at the mysterious beauty of the stars. In the future ages we look forward to some such inventions. For the present, however, there was a great agitation in the English newspapers against Major Savage's device, until, at last, after a careful enquiry Parliament forbade its employment for commercial purposes.

All this is not to say that advertisements are for ever obnoxious, at some places they are distinctly attractive. It is the overdoing of a thing that spoils it and advertising is definitely overdone. At the same time it must be confessed that some modern posters are so cleverly designed and contain such brilliant displays of colour that they are a feast to the eye. Poster-designing has become an art. Along with others, we have our advertisement-exhibitions. Artists and writers alike place their services at the disposal of the businessman, and the three combine together to allure that creature of a million tastes,—the public. Cities and watering-places advertise their charms to attract tourists by publishing pamphlets that are delightful for their beauty and taste. The advertisements of this industry are extremely pleasant, because their appeal is primarily to the imagination. Sooner or later you would buy a thing because you would need it, but travel is a luxury, and, barring business, you may never stir out until your imagination has created in you a strong desire. It is interesting to recall that my longing to go to the sea was first created, when getting down from a train at an inland station in the

dead middle of night, I walked into the deserted hall near the booking-office and saw before me a Bovril advertisement,—a beefy but smiling Englishman sitting over a tiny bottle and crossing the unbounded stretches of a dark-blue sea,—“*Bovril prevents that sinking feeling*”

Modern advertisements, therefore, are right in places and nowhere more so than at the Railway stations. What dismal haunts would these be, if unrelieved by cheerful reminders of ‘Chutney’ and ‘Cherry Blossom’! When the train is late, how satisfying it is,—provided, of course, it is summer, to walk near the Parcels Office and smell the sweetish-sickly melons of Lucknow tied up in wicker baskets, waiting the call of their fortunate consignee! Would that these melons were advertised on Railway platforms! What visions of summer would the posters conjure up on a wintry night! Advertisements, as I said before, are very proper on Railway stations. They are also proper in the circuses, plazas, and market squares of big industrial cities. In the drabness of those surroundings, they introduce a dash of colour. The old and picturesque towns, however, must not feel the commercial touch. It is revolting to imagine the river-front at Benares or the quaint streets of beautiful Florence pestered with the announcements of Mr. Henry Ford and the health-giving qualities of margarine!

There is humour also in modern advertisements, generally of a punning kind, but not displeasing.

In England the manufacturers of Bovril,—a kind of drink, specialize in these tricks, their advertisements are for ever changing and for ever new. “*Take Bovril*,” they say, “*or take the consequences!*” “*If you have missed your train, train on Bovril*” “*Do not mistake Miss taking your Bovril*” The manufacturers of the famous Lucas lamps announce, “*We make light of our labour.*” In an advertisement for pickles, two dogs are sitting opposite each other, and one having broken a bottle of the stuff over his head is bathed in it completely. With a leer of satisfaction he says to his companion, “*I am in a fine pickle*”,—a good instance of punning. Examples could easily be multiplied. Another type of humour arises from a misapplication of poetic quotations or an improbable use of literary names. I saw a photographer’s advertisement which began with the following quotation from Burns,—

*O would some gad the giftie gie us,
To see ourselves as others see us*

The Gillette razor-blade company publish pictures of well-shaved Dickens and Shakespeare, and impertinently assure us that these persons would never have kept their beards or moustaches if the convenience of these blades was possible in those times! But funniest of all, I once saw an advertisement for a facial cream headed by a quotation from Carlyle! The sage of Chelsea, alas, could not foresee that his august sentences would be utilized for vending off powder and pomade!!

Of all the countries in the world, the best advertisements, both from the point of view of colour and content come from Russia. Among other things, the Russians have also revolutioned the art of poster-composition. Educational, political, social and religious propaganda is carried on in Russia by means of cleverly-designed posters. It is a pity that these possibilities have not yet been realized in any other country.

Let us conclude with this sober reflection. Advertisements throw a very curious side-light on the cultural state of a country. They are not historical evidence, of course, and Miss Mayo has completely demonstrated the folly of using them as a basis for serious argument. But as corroborative evidence, even as data for a guarded conclusion, they are extremely valuable. They are valuable because they are an unconscious expression of the country's state of mind. In his *Jesting Pilate*, Mr. Aldous Huxley narrates the story of how while he was in Chicago, turning over the pages of a local telephone directory, his attention was caught by the full-page advertisement of a firm of undertakers, who preferred to call themselves 'morticians'. It was written in twenty lines of most nauseatingly lyrical prose, and the word 'mortician' told its own tale. The humbug of democratic equality has impregnated the American society so completely that the undertakers, who doubtless perform a necessary but by no means an intellectual trade, must prove that they are as good as members of any other profession in the land. They discard

the word 'undertaker' with its unpleasant associations and adopt a new style for themselves,—'morticians'. For 'mortician' is a word "that rhymes with such highly reputable words as physician, mathematician, academician, politician—not to mention Titian" And as Mr Huxley says, "The page on which I now gazed was something more, I reflected, than a mere page of advertisement in a telephone book It was a page out of contemporary American history."

On Hobbies

Most men have hobbies. They are solemn or irresponsible, costly or trifling, but they definitely are not utilitarian. They might, it is possible, sometimes fetch in a considerable amount of money, but that is not the spirit in which they are cultivated. Sometimes, also, their worth is surprisingly disproportionate to the wealth and care spent upon them. Generally they are undertaken because of the pleasure and occupation they bring to our idle hours.

Indeed, there is nothing rational about hobbies. There is no reason in the world why people should be anxious to collect the bus-tickets of the various countries, or why anyone should spend restless nights because he cannot add to his collection the first stamp that was issued at Madagascar or Venezulea. And yet I have known tired bank-clerks who spent all their leisure turning over the pages of a philetician's guide and trying to remember the shape of a rare and now-forgotten specimen. To see them engaged in these meditations you would suppose they were puzzling their heads over some serious discrepancies in the ledger! There are others who at the cost of great personal inconvenience keep flying kites all the scorching hours of a day in June. One wonders why? There are still others who take an exaggerated and almost inexplicable delight in fighting quails. Some

pay fancy prices for shells, some gather moths, and some like to do their own mason and carpenter. Vagaries of human interest, the delight people get from a hobby is altogether independent of its intrinsic merit or worth

Hobbies, then, represent the play of the irrational in man, and are in the nature of an overmastering passion. That alone explains why people go so much out of their way to accomplish a trifle which they would not care for otherwise. And as an individual's likes and dislikes are purely personal, so are the hobbies. One man's interest may easily be the aversion of another. Nothing is so boring as to be condemned to sit quiet at a tea-party listening to an old lady's passionate discourse on an inanity in which she happens to be interested. Set them to talk on their particular hobby, and most men would forget good manners. They presume that because they have been good enough to bestow on a certain matter their time and money, the world at least owes them the debt of an ungrudging attention. "Look at my stamps," they say, and place in your hands a musty register. "O, how charming!" you must rejoin, even though you hate the look of that familiar tome. But your polite ejaculation gives them a lever for jumping off into philatelic ecstasies. "Yes, it is rather," comes the unabashed answer,— "You see, my grandfather gave me the interest, he had a rare collection of the first Napoleon's . . ." which rarities you are invited to see, nor are you left alone until, mercilessly helped

by remarks you do not listen, you have been made to go through the entire range with sedulous attention. A good while before you reach the end you feel like bolting away. The amateur photographer with his unending album is equally over-bearing. This unconsciousness of the feelings of others is, indeed, the characteristic of all those who are obsessed with fads.

Our hobbies generally keep changing as we advance in years, though after a certain age we maintain one right to the end. Perhaps a collection of marbles or spinning-tops delights us all in childhood, then we come to be excessively fond of pictures, these days, of cinema 'stars' specially. Some get attached to games, others to books, and yet others to odd jobs of various descriptions. There is no rule about it, although one might say that in later life, the rich men's hobbies are often the daily jobs of the poor, while the poor men's hobbies are the common appurtenances of the princely life. It is generally a viscount or an earl who is fond of building his own house whereas it would be an ordinary labourer who would make of eating rare and costly hot-house fruits a hobby.

Hobbies, as we said, have something crazy about them, still, it is easily possible to praise one kind as against another. An excessive love of gardening or books is an error on the admirable side, as a great fondness for flying kites is an unmitigated folly. Some people perform the very offices of life as though they

were hobbies, the case of the miser who builds up reserves of gold is an instance to point. Here, a necessary provision for the future has become an end in itself. On the other hand, those happy mortals who relish the numerous unpleasantnesses of life, and live as though they were playing an innings in a game, are the natural leaders of mankind.

For the truth is that most men are afraid of this game, and lack courage to analyse critically its undetermined odds and chances. They find existence either so painful, or so monotonous or so unromantic that they must season it with a cultivated interest if it is to be made tolerable. Life often plays us the ruinous courtesan, that is why even at the risk of being called timid, one would rather concentrate on her furbelows than grapple with the lady herself. We develop hobbies to forget our pain and disillusionment, we get absorbed in trifles to introduce a dash of romance, of Bohemianism, of irrationality in a world whose cold logic freezes us numb.

On Examinations

Examinations are terrible things. They are terrible because they unsettle even the best among us. However excellent our preparations, howsoever assured the success, we feel a peculiar dread as the examination-day draws near. The confidence of knowledge vanishes in the morning light when, note-book in hand, we march to the fateful hall. There is an old proverb which tells us that even gold begins to melt if put to the test of fire.

This dread is inevitable because there is a large element of chance in all examinations. The human mind is an extremely sensitive instrument, and is often upset for very trivial reasons. How frequently it happens that what we remembered perfectly well outside the walls of a room escapes clean out of our memory as soon as the invigilator has deposited a paper on our desks! The mind is taken by surprise. We never anticipated that such a stupid question could be asked, and lo, there it was, in all its mocking malignity! We had spent days and weeks in getting up a certain problem and by all rules of justice and fair play it should have been there, but the examiner chose to neglect it! We never thought that we shall be required to draw a map of England and so we had concentrated on the 'written questions' in history, but here we are,—two free-hand maps to be drawn, and

both compulsory! The capacity of most human minds being limited, the number of facts we can master perfectly at any time is not large, and the courses tend to become unmanageable. Selection is, therefore, inevitable, is even necessary. Clever students are distinguished from the common by their judicious choice in study. But so long as there is selection there must also be an uncertainty, an element of chance, that would upset our calculations. If the ordinary student dreads failure, the good one fears loss of division, that is why there are very few persons who take an examination with perfect peace of mind.

Examinations are also sad things. They often mark the end of an epoch. The finals in schools and universities look like sealed envelopes from fate. We do not know what life holds in store for us,—whether we are to get a good class which means a good post or a third which means knocking about. In these days of unemployment it is not certain if even the first division spells a decent job. What, however, is certain is the knowledge that in a few weeks' time this cloistered life, so free from care, so full of pleasure in the common room and on the playing field will come to an end. All partings have an image of death in them, that is why they are so painful, and that also is the reason why, although going out of the school and the university we might win laurels of which we shall be both proud and happy, we yet feel a kind of heart-breaking as our educational career draws to a close. It is the end of a boisterous existence. Other

intermediate examinations are not fraught with this sense of tragedy and adventure, we might even feel big as we get promoted from the lower to the higher class, and yet each examination closes a period which has been definitely lived and will not be captured again. Some of our companions get ploughed, friendships are broken, a new leaf has to be turned. As we pack our boxes and are leaving the hostel for the vacation, our emotions are always tinged with a grief we cannot name.

Examinations are evil things too, for they set their seal on a classification of intellects which is as often just as otherwise. We have seen how chance decides issues, and it is not an unusual occurrence to find a really brilliant man very low down in the list. The world, however, dispenses its rewards on examination results and thus it comes about that many sit covered that should stand bare. It is well-known that an examination is no test of merit, but the knowledge is useless when it does not enable one to speed in life. That is why instead of learning things for their own sake, and for the culture of the intellect, the studies of most of us are vitiated by a keen desire to figure prominently in the class-list. What a mass of confused information we jumble up in our brains hoping that it might prove serviceable in the examination-hall! What a tragic neglect of the larger and the humanistic side of studies because we must beat another in clearing up a textual obscurity! Very few of us burn the fabled midnight oil in the disinterested pursuit of

knowledge. Often we have to warp our natural inclinations for a particular subject in order to get up another which we do not like, for fear that otherwise we might come down. An inelastic and rigidly-arranged system of examinations does not bring out the best there is in a man. It imposes a false set of values on us, and to those that are really capable but do not succeed well in these tests, it gives a false but disastrous inferiority-complex. It often destroys confidence in one's self. Clearly there is a knack of passing examinations, of getting up subjects, of preparing answers, which is not possessed by all equally. This knack is very different from real intellectual ability, and if sometimes joined to it, the two are not the same, though they are mistaken to be. And yet neither the ability of one nor the knack of the other is always certain to hit the mark, so that it is perfectly justifiable of our friends to wish us "the best of luck", and not "a reward for your merits" as we march to the examination-hall.

But examinations have one merit, a merit of helplessness. However imperfect they may be, they are yet the best means of judging intellectual abilities in a world which is still a long way from perfection. To evaluate the quality of a human mind is an extraordinarily difficult task. In some cases the development is slow, in some it stops after a particular point. All these are factors beyond the examination-calculus, as indeed they are factors beyond any other calculus devised by man. The utmost that we can

do at present is to make the system as just as possible. First, let us have no illusions about its infallibility. Let us adopt a broad and general basis of marking. We can only say that one candidate has answered his paper better, much better or very much or incomparably better than the other; it is impossible to assign marks so accurately as $57\frac{1}{2}\%$ or $49\frac{3}{4}\%$. It is absurd that a man should lose his class by half a mark. Also, there should be a very wide choice in the question-paper, and the questions themselves should demand more intelligence and critical study than a stupid mugging up of books. The examiners or rather a board of examiners should mark the answer-books with extreme care. Above all the students should be told, as the late Professor Raleigh always told his, that the final examination in a university and the Day of Judgment are two examinations, not one.

Nevertheless there is a set of people to whom examinations are entirely welcome and pleasing events. These people are called the examiners. For two or three weeks, it is true, they have to undergo hard toil in the sweltering heat of the plains, but the sense of power the position gives them, and the prospect of a thousand rupees and a comfortable vacation at Mussoorie are enough to sustain labours very much more exacting.

On Beggars

Beggars are often an unmitigated nuisance. They post themselves like a pillar before your house and pour at you unabashed their mingled blessings and supplication. You grow furious at their feigned incapacity to understand your answer, you chafe at their insolent doggedness and order them out, they merely shift the balance of their body and resume their request in a yet meeker style. The more severe you grow the more they cringe, until, your patience comes to an end, you are forced to brandish a stick, which argument tells upon them certainly, though not so far as to check them from shooting some Parthian curses as they take to their heels.

Thus, however, is only one type. There are others, those, for instance, who sing or screech before they beg, and those who make a silent request and as silently pass on. Some flout their rags before you, some base their appeal on a deformity of nature, some expect veneration for the saffron robe, some others desire to be pitied for a large family for which they hardly believe themselves to be responsible. The list is not exhaustive, for although certain varieties tend to recur among beggars, most of them are so far individual as to constitute types all by themselves. Tutored in the school of life where codes are not prescribed, leading a vagrant existence on the roads,

they have neither the graceful civilities we, well-fed and cared-for beings, take so much pains to learn, nor, indeed, the grey cloak of uniform behaviour which, in the long run, makes human lives so dull. Driven by the compulsive force of Hunger, they exercise their ingenuity in finding new ways to satisfy an old and, unfortunately, recurring desire. What they do clumsily or with invented eccentricity, many others of us,—respectable Middle Class, are daily doing under cover of established institutions. For even among the beggars all are not idle, there are those who do some sort of work before they can get their day's bread, and if a diurnal pounding on the barrel organ is not productive of social welfare, it can be paralleled by many an office just as useless, which carries a hundred times its pay and not much more than its labour. How very often Birth is Destiny! The old Priest of the beggar is, in such cases, but Presbyter writ large, and the new calligraphy confounds detection. Necessity lodged in a hungry stomach drives them as well as ourselves to courses which, judged with sufficient philosophic detachment, are equally adventitious and unavailing.

Here we might make some useful distinctions. Though all of us are actuated by the same insistent need, and, therefore, led to work to satisfy our desires, there are among the beggars a class of people, able-bodied and strong, who take to this job as one would to a profession, just because they love delight and scorn laborious days. It is true that there is a

certain abandon in their lives; they do not mind going without meals every now and then; they take life as it comes, neither unduly flustered by thrills, nor unnecessarily depressed by reverses. Even hope with them is but a mild surge in the blood which hardly impresses itself upon consciousness. Dirty and bedraggled, they stand at street-corners, shrewdly guessing which of the many passers-by will respond to their appeal, and then darting at him a phrase and a glance. Perhaps they like the game of mentally appraising the charitable dispositions of the people they see, and are glad if their expectations come right. Glad in a neutral or impersonal way,—because, as I have said, they have so far attained a stoic serenity as to be undisturbed by the ordinary emotional responses of life. One such held me by his uplifted hand and asked in a tone of aristocratic calm, “could you do *us* a kindness?” As this creature was heftier than myself and seemed to be a deliberate loungeur, I did not at all feel the necessity of being kind to him, but he was neither disturbed nor disappointed. Day in and day out you could see him going up and down the same street, unkempt and bearded, with a red or a green scarf round his neck,—a picture of health and unconcern, always asking the same dignified question, “Could you do *us* a kindness?” His carelessness attracted people, and I discovered later that he rarely went without a good meal and that freedom from anxiety as well as occasional pints of beer were responsible for his ruddy complexion. And yet he

did look supremely emotionless and composed when he begged you for a charity

What is one to do with such fellows it is not easy to say Attempts have been made to reclaim them to useful vocations but they have not led to much good It is found that the winding road and a vagrant life have an unconquerable attraction for them, and enquiries reveal that their roving mania is inherited from fathers who were as good tramps as they In India we have thousands of *Sadhus* who are among the brawniest men in the land, but whose sole occupation is to cover their bodies with ashes in the morning, and then go chanting through cities, begging alms, or to sit in scores by the bank of a sacred river, serenely turning the beads, though wide awake to the life of the senses, or entertaining their gilded idols with acrobatic feats and dithyrambic hymns The pious bathers dole them out money, and sweets and bread, so that by the time they close their shops they have earned enough for the day and something to spare for the morrow Everything considered it is a jolly existence Time enough for exercise and massage in the morning, a refreshing bath, a necessary coat of ashes, a little hymnal in full-throated ease, then, leisurely cooking of a splendid meal, to be followed by sleep, a similar service in the evening, and the day rounded-off every now and then, by a curious office in the name of some god of fertility How generous and uncritical is that piety which supports this picturesque charlatanism! But that is not all.

Sometimes the good people invite these *Sadhus* in bands and give them sumptuous dinners hoping to be repaid in kind in heaven. Judging nicely as to the time when they are no longer welcome in a particular city, they move to another centre, travelling without ticket, frequently getting thrown out of the train, hiding under benches, sleeping in the passage, yet somehow reaching the destination, indeed, within a few years visiting all the *tirthas*, even though they are situated thousands of miles from each other, in the four corners of the land. No *kumbh* is ever to be missed, for it is on such occasions that they get reunited with the religious guilds to which they belong. The *kumbh* fairs, indeed, are occasions for unstinted guzzling, enormous feasts from the devout, and an aristocratic insistence on privileges. Of the millions that assemble to bathe in the river the *Sadhus* have an unchallenged precedence. At no time excessively humble, it is now that they walk to and from the *ghats* like kings. Having unique opportunities of studying humanity, and having peregrinated all over India by the time they decline into old age, it is no wonder that they come to read the fates and fortunes of men so well and are full of sagacious counsel. Every one of them has led a life which has had its adventures, every life would read like a fiction if chronicled.

Of the lame, the halt and the blind who are driven to beg because they are incapable of earning a livelihood, of the lepers whose bodies are an eyesore

to them and to ourselves, and who, for want of better provision, haunt the temple steps and infect the idea of worship with sad thoughts, of these the case is altogether different. Life has dealt cruelly with them, and they find existence heavy and insupportable. In many cases it would be a mercy if the victims were painlessly exterminated. The abundance of such human derelicts in any particular country is a savage comment on the government thereof. For in these days when science has so far discovered the mysteries of nature, and many an ill of the flesh yields to a therapeutic treatment, it cannot be maintained that all the miseries of these helpless sufferers are divinely imposed. Individual charity meted out to salve a particular conscience, or to let the offending creature shift out of sight merely helps to perpetuate these wretches in their present position. A large and a concerted drive is necessary before we can fork out the diseases which range so free-footed in our land. Just at present, in more senses than one, India is *the* land of beggars.

On Books

Of making many books these days there truly is no end, but thanks to the hurry and bustle of life, and the difficulty of earning a livelihood, reading is not generally a weariness of the soul. No one can pretend to gather in his mind all the swirling lava of information that daily pours out from the printing press, why then worry? Some books do make a greater noise than others and we might read them to keep up conversation in polite circles. But we need not be so conventionally-minded. We might have our favourite authors, or, if we do not have much time, we might leave it to chance, and read anything at all that comes to hand. Here is God's plenty; there are no hard and fast rules and reading may be the pleasantest of pastimes.

The majority of people now-a-days do not lead the lives of eighteenth century country parsons. Those spacious delights of an arm-chair study, when neither the cold blast nor the chilling fears of an impecunious existence entered your room, and the smell of morocco from the shelves set your mind a-dreaming,—these delights are gone, or at best are possible for the monied and the leisured few. For others, books have to be gobbled in snatches, between intervals of business-hours, in tubes and trams to and back from office, in the short respite of week-ends and on holidays. A

particular class of readers creates a particular kind of book. The majority of us being such hurried and inartistic readers, the majority of modern books also are poor and ill-digested. Numerically, perhaps, we have more good books now than at any other time before,—part of this is due to an extensive system of education—but proportionally the amount of rubbish we produce far exceeds the output of any other generation. The printing-press has not been an unequivocal blessing.

Of the ordinary reader, then, and the half-or-no-books that he reads, more need not be said, except that such reading hardly edifies, and leaving the cheap thrills which a blood-curdling story sends down the spine, seldom gives any real satisfaction. Such books, moreover, are creating serious problems for the big libraries of the world. The British Museum in London and the Bodleian library at Oxford, for instance, receive a copy of every book published in the United Kingdom, and in the United Kingdom, on a rough estimate, fourteen thousand books are published every year. Where is the space to garner all this portentous stupidity? The number certainly contains a few good books, books well worth preserving, either for their topical or for their permanent significance. These generally can be singled out without much trouble, but what is troublesome is the task of selecting the probably durable from the certainly ephemeral in the remainder. Who can anticipate the exact importance of our rubbish to the future? And then,

if we were to condemn all this and make a holocaust, it is very likely we shall be destroying along with the deservedly worthless, the early work of some writers who in a short time might prove to be of considerable importance. In the eighteenth century the Bodleian refused to accept the works of some women novelists but now that they have attained fame, the loss of those first editions is regretted. The newsletters of the seventeenth century were of small interest in their time, and few libraries cared to stock them along with their serious tomes. How grateful we are to the private collectors whose busy curiosity preserved for us these documents of a by-gone age! It is difficult to anticipate the judgment of the future upon us; the much-needed destruction of modern books, therefore, is also a difficult matter.

But let us come to the good books, books with a burning core, books of which though volumes sing the praise, this brief definition from Milton still gives the neatest summary,—“a good book is the precious life-blood of a master spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life.” The genuine readers of such books do not change from age to age. They bring to the task a sympathetic imagination, a humility of soul, a respectful sincerity, a desire to learn. Complete agreement is not necessary,—indeed, a partial disagreement improves our delight, but careful attention is. We cannot get the best out of a great writer, unless we attend to him in the serious spirit in which he took his art. I do not say that all

good books should be thus approached, not all good books are great, and some good books demand a genial fellowship and not a solemn dedication. The feelings with which I open my Lamb are very different from those which I bring to Dante. The kindly humour of Chaucer is far removed from the gigantic laughter of Rabelais, and the two are not to be enjoyed in a similar frame of mind. All, however, that good literature equally demands is sincerity.

To be properly appreciated these good and great books should be in your own possession. A borrowed book is a mean enjoyment, you have to read it by such and such a time, you may not mark it, you may not write your own notes in the margin, it is an usufruct the owner might terminate whenever he wants to do so. Slow reading and occasional marginalia are, with me, half the delights of study. A good sentence is like a draught of champagne, it should go down the eyes slowly, creating a tingling sensation in the body. For this reason I read a good sentence with soft attention, I let it stand at the threshold of my intellect and see what pleasant associations it evokes, then gradually I take in its fellows, and by and by the magic of words so works upon me that I relive the experience and am the richer for my reading. Then, I mark the lines, write in the margin some sort of a remark which might look foolish to others, but which serves to remind me of my first experience of that piece. Once again, not all good books are to be thus digested; some, as Bacon said of old, may only be tasted and re-tasted.

and yet never read in their entirety Pepys is an excellent example of the kind Old Burton and Anthony à Wood and Aubrey also delight in this way. One of the great charms of books is not their actual study but the thought that you could read them if you liked. There is that green volume on the shelf, tempting you like a neglected beloved wishing to regain your affection,—you take it down *Familiar Letters or Epistolæ Ho-Eliaæ* by James Howell. Delightful letters, how you remember the day when you read them last; now, you just turn the pages, read a sentence here and there and put the volume back on the shelves. You could read Howell, but Howell must wait, this time you want to be in the company of Horace Walpole at Strawberry Hill. *The Letters of Horace Walpole*, therefore

A genuine book-lover is never indifferent to the questions of binding and print; indeed there are men who form collections merely on such criteria. These, however, are mere hobbies, though delightful hobbies, than matters of literary taste. We are concerned with the private library of a *littérateur* of moderate means. Unbound books are not dignified enough to have a place on one's shelves, but so long as the binding is neat and strong nothing more is to be desired. Old editions, of course, must be in their ancient covers and should stand by themselves in a distinct corner. I have a prejudice against re-bound books; they are like men who go crooked and then try to prop themselves up with the help of mechanical appliances. For

the rest Lamb's observations on this head are singularly just, as indeed they everywhere are in the matter of books. As for the print, it must be clean and legible and proportionally suited to the page. I do not know the mathematical rule about it, but it is certain that only one kind of type suits a particular page perfectly. The science of bibliography is concerned with these things.

A cosy and well-equipped library, whose walls are covered with shelves, whose shelves are stacked with books of your choice, where grave and reverend authors stand unannoyed with the genial and the licentious, where, as into a haven of peace, you retire from the world's maddening crowd, where the past relives for you in all its fantasy and charm, and the voices of the present come distant and thin, and the fears of the future are momentarily forgotten,—a library is the most inviolable of sanctuaries one can find in this life. Personally, there is none else I desire.

The Spirit of Adventure

Adventure became part of human life when our first parents took the forbidden apple and, as a consequence, got expelled from their garden paradise. Adam and Eve are really our first adventurers.

Since then, there have been countless millions who dared and did, dared and died; some, whose memorials are with us, others, not less enterprising, but forgotten like the roses which bloomed in Queen Victoria's reign.

Indeed, it will not be improper to say that all men are more or less adventurers in one kind or another, at some period of their lives. Perhaps the spirit of adventure is inherent in the very conditions of human existence. We learn much by education, more by experience, and yet these are some blind alleys of life from which we know not how to get out, where education and experience are unavailing, where we have either to scale the walls and take a leap in the dark or pull them down, or do any other thing at all, recklessly, with but a dim guess at the consequences, somewhat in the spirit of a desperate enterprise. There are situations in the life of every man when the human spirit is at bay and decisions are not easy to make. Choose how we might, there would be a misgiving about our choice, a sense of spiritual adventure. So long as we do not know all the secrets

of life, so long as there are a vast number of instances in which the workings of this universe remain a mystery, that sense must also remain. These mysteries are not within an ace of being solved, there is, therefore, no immediate danger of the spirit of adventure disappearing from us.

We said that every man is an adventurer, that is in a spiritual sense. The majority of us are adventurers in a material sense also. Those who do not have a settled income filling their purses with an easy regularity, must feel that the very precariousness of the means of existence makes living a fearful adventure. When a poor young man stands on the threshold of life and makes a choice of his profession, not knowing whether he has done well or otherwise, he too must feel the half-welcome thrill of adventurous uncertainty. However, there are some enterprises one would not very much care for, and although a few doughty spirits, like habitual tramps and professional beggars, would despise the idea, it may be said that the majority of mankind would prefer adventure to begin only beyond the margin of a settled existence.

It is a common phrase in the mouth of the rich, "O, life is a great, a magnificent adventure". Obviously they do not use the term in the same sense in which we have been using it, because for them there is no danger, no risks, no insecurity. Adventure is their term for the ability to obtain the good things of life just as they desire. They have only to rub Aladdin's lamp, only to spend their gold, and there is the object

they were itching for. How different from the adventure of the man who goes out into the wide world and does not know whether tomorrow's bread will be forthcoming!

Adventure, then, implies risk and uncertainty, the presence of some elements that are incalculable. It is clear, therefore, that with an increase in human knowledge, with a surer grasp of the forces of nature, that which was adventurous at one time will become commonplace at others. Men who travelled in the first trains or boarded the frail ocean craft of the by-gone centuries must have had fear at their hearts, they were not sure that they would come back as safe as they were going out, travelling, therefore, was a kind of adventure. Now, when fast expresses go hurtling across continents at seventy miles an hour and the ocean liners weather storms with perfect ease, when everything is so certain and settled, no one would consider a trip from Bombay to New York as a piece of magnificent dare-devilry. It is just commonplace. Because the risks of aviation have not yet been minimized, there might still be adventure in a flight, but it is less, for instance, than what it was ten years ago, and in another decade one might fly from Sydney to Croydon with as much security as though one were travelling from Ballia to Gorakhpur.

We dare and desire, we want to know, and through a series of failures and half-successes which are useful in the attainment of knowledge, we come to learn the secrets of the world in which we find

ourselves living. This desire to analyse our surroundings,—to tear the veil from off the face of a mystery, is inherent in human nature. We always grope for light. So strong, indeed, is this desire that we would rather perish than stay in ignorance, or, maybe, we would perish if we stayed in ignorance for long. Of the two kinds of death, a certain death due to ignorance, and a chance of death with at least an equal chance of being saved,—and if saved, of obtaining the hidden knowledge also, the latter is certainly preferable. Nature has given to human beings a few instincts for self-preservation, the rest of knowledge has had to be acquired through toil and pain. Adventure, then, is due to a divine restlessness, an irrepressible desire to know.

It is also due to a longing for power. Indeed this succeeds the other. Once we have known the secrets of a phenomenon, the impulse is to utilize it in our service, to manipulate its occurrence, to change it if it did not suit our needs. We must subdue the elements, or at least restrict their power, else in the end they would wipe us out. In the first place, man conquered the animal kingdom, domesticated beasts, killed them when food was required. Then came the conquest of land, slow, laborious, but sure. From land he went to the waters and harnessed the waves to his service. Last of all came the mastery over air,—a story of our own times, a conquest which is not yet complete. When recently Professor Piccard made his historic ascent in a balloon and penetrated

the stratosphere, he did it to increase scientific knowledge, but science in time becomes the hand-maid of industry. Knowing we subdue, the winds and the waters bear the collar of Man who has mastered them through sheer intrepidity.

Power follows knowledge and is itself followed by gain. Those stout adventurers of the sixteenth century, the giant navigators like Columbus and Drake, were not so much inspired by a disinterested thirst for knowledge, as with a desire to find out continents of untold wealth, to increase their own power and glory, and the glory of the kings they served. Some of the famous adventures of our own day were undertaken with a similar motive. When Lord Wakefield finances the record-breaking flights of the Mollisons, it is to advertise his own industry, and—they generally add a nationalist plank—to prove the superiority of British machines over those of others. An increase in orders follows every successful adventure. The attempts of Sir Malcolm Campbell at the Daytona Beach have likewise a double purpose. Italy sends a whole armada of aeroplanes from Rome to America. Wiley Post of the United States flies round the world in record time. There are double flights and single flights across the Atlantic, round the poles, from one arbitrary point to another. Nations vie in setting up records, every now and then we hear of new and extraordinary stunts. In a commercial age, this competition was inevitable, finance and adventure were bound to go hand in hand. Nevertheless, we

cannot belittle the achievements of those who risk their lives and accomplish feats which, in the long run, help to bring the forces of nature under human control

Whether this conquest means an increase in happiness is quite a different question. It does in some cases, it has been a great boon to know the causes of malaria and plague. In others, such as the invention of aeroplanes, it has been a double-edged discovery. Whether we could have stopped at any moment in our search for knowledge, whether we could have discovered the causes of malaria without also manufacturing a Krupp bomb, is a difficult question, and one which we shall not attempt to answer here. Suffice it to say, that so long as Matter holds its secrets,—and it is far from having yielded all of them—men will continue their struggle for power, and the world will not lack its adventurers. When the Brazilian forests have been ranged and the wilds of Sahara made profitable, when men have crossed and recrossed the Pacific in a day, when other Shackletons and other Courtaulds have tamed the Poles, when Everest has known the footprint of man and geologists in rockets have impressed the bottom of the deep, there will still be numerous thrills to lure the enterprising. Perhaps we will try to make the moon habitable. There will be no dearth of adventure in the old world and we will create a new. After the relative conquest of matter, men might turn their attention to subdue the spirit. The human soul may be analysed in a laboratory.

THE SPIRIT OF ADVENTURE

There would be no end of fantastic experiments In the attempt to reduce ignorance there is adventure; from one certainty we try to arrive at another and so there is adventure again The cycle is unending

In the olden days men had to be adventurous through sheer necessity The stout Viking and the Norse and the followers of Chingez Khan had to find their food anyhow. Hunger and the lust for power gave heart to their enterprize Very few people lead adventurous lives nowadays to obtain the means of existence, and with the increase of machinery their numbers will certainly be reduced But the point is that even in an era of peace and plenty men will be adventurous They will be adventurous merely to break the ennui of their satisfied and monotonous lives. They might jump from the sky-scrappers of Chicago simply for the thrill of it. The Holy Ghost has never left mankind in a coma of uneventful perfection From Adam to Professor Piccard, from Eve to Mrs Putnam, human beings have been adventurous, and as the past so the future is like to be

Untouchability in India

If one were a mathematician and a sociologist enough, it would be interesting to compute the mischief in the world due to outworn but undiscarded systems. Human beings, it is obvious, do not live scientifically, sentiment, usage and custom sanctify even unreasonable institutions, and vice acquires a curious vitality with the passage of time. What is good for one age is not, therefore, necessarily good for all ages, and if we scrape old and inefficient machinery in our mills, there is no reason why there should not be periodic clearances in the complicated workshop of human society. In the long run, however, these adjustments do come, we have political revolutions when the established divinities are thrown over, economic catrachisms which level down inequalities and set up new and less iniquitous social orders. But wars and revolutions are not unimixed blessings. If they are necessary, they often destroy much that is good with much that is ignoble. Wisdom consists in stopping the rot before it goes too far, let social institutions stand the test of reason and be purged of the dead matter that stops their growth.

That "untouchability" in India is a relic of the bygone ages, when, perhaps, it might have been useful, but which now merely serves as a drag on the progress of the country nobody can deny. It is an

out-moded social convention curiously out of place in a world where the democratic cry of "equality" has been ringing for the last hundred and fifty years. It is amazing how inconsistent, illogical, and unthinking, human beings sometimes are. A religion which is so considerate towards animals, and prescribes the feeding of ants and such other mite, yet tolerates the most galling system of human degradation. Hinduism is a vast assemblage of dogmas and creeds, ranging from the highest to the lowest, often contradictory, though existing side by side, always offering something suited to the various intellectual capacities of those who have faith in it. Such a system could hardly have been the outcome of one process of thought; it is rather the result of various accretions through the ages. In its history, therefore, lies its justification.

Historically speaking, "untouchability" was probably justified in its origin. When the fair and hygienically advanced Aryans conquered the dark and relatively unclean races of India, they were naturally anxious to preserve uncontaminated their racial purity and civilization. We can understand their sentiments by comparing them with those of the Americans about the Negroes, or with those of the white settlers about the natives of Africa. Marriage or social contact between the two was unthinkable. Gradually the Aryan prejudices became hardened, and instead of committing the excesses of "lynching", they invented a refinement of spiritual torture, and in a

system of castes, relegated the natives to the lowest rank of the "untouchables"

In its origins a hygienic and an ethnic precaution, "untouchability" was later utilized for perpetuating the power of the Brahmans. It gave them a sense of superiority. It is nice to feel that one has been chosen by God to be a living deity when one is born in a Brahman family. For such a one there is little need to work, let the menial castes look to his provision. Secure in his arrogance for which he had no more merit than the accident of his birth, the Brahman has lorded over a large section of his fellow human beings these several centuries. With security came laziness, and the superiority of intellect which made his aristocracy justifiable in the beginning, and would have made it so any time afterwards, was gone. The form, the birth-hierarchy, the mould remained, the reality had vanished away.

One evil breeds another, and if the Brahmans declined from their height, the Shudras declined in their lowliness. Granting that the "depressed classes" were really unattractive in the beginning, unclean and uncivilized,—they could not be civilized if they were rigidly confined to a section and stigmatized as permanently low. In their unrelieved misery they could only sink from bad to worse, until now a stage has been reached when some of these poor, helpless human beings in India may easily be taken as the worst specimens of humanity. Worst specimens also of what social repression can do.

UNTOUCHABILITY IN INDIA

If we liked to know the causes of India's present degeneration, we need not search histories and archives, or give blame to the British, we need only search our hearts and look at the "untouchables". Rigidity and progress are two contradictory notions; we cannot have them both together. If a social system makes "birth" the sole determinant of a man's career, that social system precludes almost half the nation from doing any enterprize. Poor and uneducated, the "depressed classes" are confined to only a few and lower kinds of professions, and those do not particularly tend to sharpen the intellect. Centuries of wretchedness have made them impoverished in heredity, so that now they are a vast nightmare on the Indian consciousness, and quite unwittingly keep the nation down. They or we? We rather, and our immemorial tyrannizing. It is not fanciful to attribute India's decline and subjection to "untouchability". The thing itself and the principle of which it is the result are the cause. A united nation is irresistible. Physicians are needed to cure a body when the body is diseased and cannot support itself. India is diseased. "Untouchability" and the "depressed classes" are our cancer.

The defenders of the present system would say, —are there not castes everywhere, even in the democratic countries? Is England free from untouchability? Peers and noblemen do not like to hobnob with labourers back from their work. Moreover, class-exclusiveness breeds culture, the fact that rich and

refined persons marry among rich and refined families is the only way to produce highly intelligent citizens, even geniuses. Nature alone is not responsible for the great men of the world, nurture and upbringing also play a very important part and nowhere could one have better nurture than in the upper class families. Caste distinctions, therefore, are very beneficial to the world.

These arguments certainly have some force, and no one will be foolish enough to assert that all human beings are equal or could ever be equalized. In every society some sort of class distinction there will always tend to be. Some will be more intelligent than others, some will be stronger than others, some will have special aptitudes for special kinds of work. But there is all the difference in the world between naturally determined classes in which members of one may pass on to the other by dint of skill, and classes which are rigidly and unalterably determined by the merest circumstance of birth. To be condemned to a degraded existence as soon as one is born, without being given a chance in life, is the fate of all those who have the indiscretion to choose "depressed class" parents in India. It is like committing a person to jail without hearing his side of the case. That is not so in Europe. It is true there is not yet as much equality of opportunity as there ought to be, but the state in England does many things to educate the children of the poor, and if any of them has the ability, there is nothing to prevent him from attaining the

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highest rank in the country. In clean clothes a labourer may dine with the Prime Minister,—there would be no pollution in the event. Workers and noblemen throng together in the same church and nobody is 'fouled'. There is no "untouchability" in Europe.

In India too, under the impact of the West, the rigidity of caste-system is breaking down. Now-a-days people are not outcasted for having crossed the seas, and if they are they do not care. Excellent propaganda by several institutions has made us aware of this crying evil in our social system. Such indignities as the exclusion from the use of wells and schools or even temples have been removed at several places. In the North where Hindus were living with Mohammedans who also were sometimes regarded as "untouchables" (funny idea!), untouchability was never very strong, because contact with the other community was not easy to avoid. In the South, however, the Brahmans exercised their might (or right?), and do to this day, rather vigorously. Often they claim a right of passage on the road, and no "untouchable" should come anywhere near their august presence,—fore or aft. As though the poor Shudra breathed poison in the air from which their sanctimonious bodies should be preserved! This tenderness about their own persons may be understandable, but they do not seem to have more confidence in their gods either, who also, they seem to fear, would be unable to stand the not-disinfected presence of the pariah!!

One could wish these fellows had a little more sense in their well-shaved noddles

The Hindu's idea of cleanliness and personal hygiene is admirable, and it must be said, that even at this day, there are few races in the world who strive to attain such personal cleanliness as the race which is responsible for this stigma of untouchability. The so-called dirt of the Hindu is merely the dirt of poverty. The "untouchables" being generally the poorest of the Hindus, are, therefore, often the dirtiest, in the sense in which some other Hindus and many other poor people of the world are dirty also. The present problem is largely economic. The removal of religious disabilities will give the "untouchables" an extraordinarily heartening sense of equality, and then it will be their task as well as that of the nation to raise them from their slough of poverty. Religious compartments are the form, the real thing is their economic situation. The clamour for a few more or less seats in the councils here or there is a mere battle-cry. It will die after a while. The main task now as hereafter should be to rouse this slumbering and self-divided giant to a conception of its proper strength.

What would be the Character of the Next War?

If the last War was to end war, the next war, whenever it comes, will certainly be to end civilization

For war is no more now the romantic thing it used to be. In the eighteenth century, it was part of national life, nothing terrible, indeed a kind of sublimated picnic. It was the greatest of open-air sports, and much preferable to, and safer than staying in insanitary houses. It was the only means of the nations coming together. In those days when an Englishman sailed to the West Indies to fight with the French, it took him six glorious months to complete the journey,—no submarines to blow up, no bombs to break the ship into smithereens, no fear of any kind,—life, the gay alternation between whisky and soda and a game of cards under the awning. There was no danger in those wars, until men were fed up with an existence of luxurious ease and actually longed for the engagement, and then it was all so swiftly over. Battles took place about once a month and lasted anywhere from twenty minutes to a whole day. Waterloo was a matter of few hours. The armies did not fight during winter, and on rainy days, saints' days, generals' birth-days, they were always off. During the cessation of hostilities, the combatants visited each

other's camp and drank to the other's health. One would have thought there was no animosity between them, and fighting was only a clean manly sport. There was scope for personal valour and generally the whole show ended in a victory for both the sides.

How different were things during the last World War! Miserable existence in dug-outs and trenches, fighting in rain, fog and snow, fearing what moment the heavens might sputter a death-dealing bomb or the enemies let loose a poisonous gas with its horrors of unknown tortures! The eternal booming of guns, the whizzing past of shells, has so shocked the nerves of many who were fortunate enough to come back alive that they have never been normal again. Starvation for relatives at home, fears of their being bombarded from air, poor food in the trenches, epidemics and generally the existence of a beast,—a young man who went to the War of 1914 and escaped death, may truly feel that he has been through hell. If he is alive, his generation has been swept away. Having lived a protracted fear-of-death for four years, he now realizes that life is shattered and is never more the thing it used to be. We need not refer to the disastrous economic consequences of the event from which we are suffering to this day.

Now about the war of the future one thing is certain, it will begin where the last World War ended, and having done its wholesale work of destruction will soon come to an end. Shrewd observers believe that the old technique of sending an ultimatum and

THE CHARACTER OF THE NEXT WAR

waiting for the consequences is out of date. In future, any nation which finds itself threatened, or desires to gain a supremacy over another, will invade the enemy's country without a warning, deal a shattering blow through an extensive aerial raid, take possession of the industrial towns on the frontier, and securely intrench itself in the enemy's territory before the enemy has even recovered from the surprise. Perhaps the damage done may be so extensive, the fear of aerial bombardment so overpowering that the invaded nation may soon come to terms. But this is not likely, as the other nations can hardly stand apart and watch, there are international commitments, and interests are so deeply involved that the quarrels of one country are the quarrels of many another. The radio transmits insults and irritation universally, and ridiculous as it might seem, the "desire of Poland to keep a Corridor, along with the immutable resolution of the Czechs to die in an enclave rather than to live in an Anschluss" may be among the reasons why we should be presently involved in another armageddon.

For the truth is that "neutrality" in the old sense of the international law is gone. The signatories to the Covenant of the League of Nations undertake to maintain the territorial integrity of its members, and by means of an economic boycott punish the unlawful aggressor. The Kellogg Pact also aims at a similar end, but as at least one first class crisis,—the Sino-Japanese war of 1933, has shown, that pacts and treaties do not avail at all, if the international will to

proved it, the resistance of a country depends upon its economic resources and on the rapidity with which it can mobilize them to suit its military needs. What the French call *potentiel de guerre*, the "potentials" of war, are really far more important than the fighting units at the front. The means of transport, oil, coal, electricity, gas, iron and other minerals, all kinds of food-stuff and all those who are engaged in their production must needs be destroyed, if the power of the enemy is to be systematically crippled. An inoffensive farmer tilling his land in the interior of the country, is, therefore, an agent of destruction and for that reason deserves to be killed. As the countries actually engaged in war depend for their food supplies and raw materials on those which are not, these other countries very soon come within the belligerent ring. Aeroplanes and ships are powerful means of transport, and therefore any outbreak of hostilities on land at once develops into an aerial and naval conflict also. Poisonous gases are let loose, high-power explosives do their deadly task of large-scale destruction, ships are sunk, towns razed, armies blown up,—the hounds of war have girdled the earth.

Because almost everything is war-material now, the combatants will unhesitatingly engage in a ruthless sweeping away of all objects that come within their reach. In this process of universal destruction, the greatest havoc will certainly be wrought by aeroplanes, and,—the legacy of the chemist,—the noxious

Dictatorship, or the failure of Democracy?

With the accession of Hitler to power in Germany, one more democracy has been replaced by a dictatorship. The Great War brought about a cascade of monarchies, the post-War Europe has witnessed an equally abundant conversion from government by the people to government by one man. Russia, Italy, Germany and Turkey are the great dictatorships of our time. Greece is sometimes one and sometimes the other, the Central European states have not yet quite made up their minds, Spain is a republic now, Poland has her grand old man, while it is impossible to write of Central and Southern America, where revolutions keep lurking, and presidents and dictators are set up, taken down and murdered within the course of one revolving moon. However, Europe will serve to illustrate our point.

Has democracy failed, or, alternatively, does it lead to a dictatorship? The answer is that it has serious drawbacks, although all dictatorships are not entirely due to these. Some of the underlying axioms of democracy happen to be pragmatically wrong, and we shall deal with them presently, but here it is only fair to say that two of the great European dictatorships,—those in Russia and Turkey are not reactions from democracy at all. In both these countries, the change was from autocracies to

government by one man in the interests of the people Of Italy too one might say that Fascism is not very new to that soil, for in the past centuries Italian politics have often taken the form of dictatorship by one party In Germany, Hitler's accession to power is due to several causes, of which the revival of the old alliance between a powerful military movement and a subordinate political machine is certainly one The failure of democracy to remedy the evils of the German people at present is another

Now the underlying assumptions of democracy are three It lays down that for political purposes all men are equal, that they have full liberty of action consistent with the similar rights of others, that the ideal of the state is to make them happy This declaration of faith sounds attractive enough, but there are great difficulties in realizing it To begin with, men are demonstrably unequal, and the difference is not merely due to the differences in environment, bringing-up and education To give all men an equal vote is not to level down distinctions, and unless human brains are manufactured in a laboratory, not all persons would be equally capable to govern Even apart from this question of ability, there is the depressing realization that, generally speaking, men are not interested enough in the task of governing themselves. As Mrs Webb has justly remarked, a great drawback of democracy is the will-lessness of the people Voters go to a polling-booth driven either by mob fear or mob greed They know precious little of what the

government is doing in the country and so long as their interests are secure they do not care. There is no powerful bond uniting the rich and the poor electors of a district, nor is there a bond between the elector in various districts such as there is between workers in the same industry. So much, then, for the political working of equality. Let us now consider the second principle, the principle of free action. Freedom in this case is only nominal, for even the so-called democratic countries of the world find it increasingly necessary to interfere with the individual's liberty. There is a mass of state regulations about the birth, health, education, insurance and burial of the people. It is being realized that the claims of the whole community are more important than the claim of the individual, the individual, therefore, must renounce a large part of his liberty to the state. The Governments of most civilized countries control the public-utility services, such as the post office, the railways and the shipping, and *laissez-faire* in industry is no longer permitted. As for the third principle, the happiness of the people, it is considered that 'the people' is a supremely ignorant creature and does not know, cannot know, clearly where its good actually lies. It is the statesman with a vision, the man who can both imagine the destiny of a country and courageously lead it to the goal, the national dictator in short, who knows better than the people how best they can be happy.

For the efficient working of democracy a party-

DICTATORSHIP, OR THE FAILURE OF DEMOCRACY?

system is necessary and parties are often a troublesome affair. In Germany before the advent of Hitler there were so many parties that not one of them could obtain a clear majority in the Reichstag, there had to be coalition governments, therefore, and coalition governments are weak and shifty. Owing to an excess of parties the normal life of a French government is not more than half a year. Were not the French people as individualistic and liberty-loving as they are, and supposing their country not so well off as it happens to be, perhaps there might have been a dictatorship in France. Bernard Shaw has pointed out the absurdity of a Parliamentary opposition. No business could ever flourish in which the actions of a manager were always being checkmated by a truculent directorate. That is exactly what happens in a party government.

Most democracies have an exaggerated veneration for the constitution, whereas the changing conditions of the world demand drastic readjustments.

For the variety of problems which confront some of the countries of modern Europe it has been found that not democracy but dictatorship is the solution, for when democracy had its chance, it failed. If a country is able to get a strong-willed and far-sighted statesman like Mussolini as its dictator, more good will come out of dictatorship than out of a hundred years of weak-kneed democracy. The prestige of Italy has been enormously raised during the last decade. Turkey has made greater advances under

The Problem of Unemployment

In the aftermath of the Great War there came a crowd of evils. Influenza swept over the world shortly afterwards, other diseases equally deadly but not so infectious exacted a sluggish toll. Governments were thrown over, currencies fell or rose to fall, the world's supply of commodities was disorganized, huge debts were created, and whether trade was brisk or not, large sums had to be paid in reparations by most countries of the world. No nation can afford to have deficit budgets for long, and with depleting resources and extended schemes of public welfare, the crisis was bound to come. In the munitions industries, unemployment followed soon after the War, and as the world-economics is a very complicated affair, and much damage is done by unthinking and voluble politicians, and much mischief wrought by speculating financiers, the trouble developed, until we have come to the present pass when there are millions of unemployed in the world.

As we have already pointed out, there were several evils at work. The problem of unemployment differs from country to country and apart from the general causes, there are also special ones in each case. After the War several nations which had formerly depended for most of their manufactured goods on the industrialized countries of the world,

began to set up their own factories at home To cripple foreign competition they imposed high tariffs and thus secured the market for themselves. England was one of the first countries in the world to be industrialized, and part of her present unemployment is due to the fact that now she has powerful competitors in the field In India, Japan has ousted her considerably, and what with the boycott, their own native industries, and a protective tariff, Indians are to a considerable extent responsible for the English unemployment The dominions like Australia and Canada are very keen on their national development and would not yield to the mother-country America has erected high tariff walls, and is big and industrialized enough to supply her own needs But in America the large-scale business, and extreme mechanical efficiency has thrown millions out of work Each new machine tends to be more specialized than the last and displaces human labour Those that are thrown out of work, not having money, cannot increase the demand, while the new and the swifter machine multiplies the supply Moreover, the interest on the capital invested in the old plant has still to be paid, while more money has to be borrowed for the new machines and there is yet more interest to pay Supply out-running demand the prices fall, profits are reduced, more men are thrown out of work, and with the diminished purchasing power, there is a further decrease in demand Add to this the natural desire of

people not to spend in times of scarcity, and the fall in the currencies of half the world, and there is a perfect muddle in which no one exactly knows what to do. In a big country like Germany, unemployment is due to slightly different causes, the people have been impoverished by War and the burden of the reparations is crushing.

It is an amazing situation. The soil has never given such a magnificent yield, the means of transport were never better organized, there is no war or pestilence in the world, and yet the Argentinians are suffering because they have produced too much wheat, and thousands of Americans starve because there is so much wealth in the country.

Numerous remedies have been suggested. It is said that the situation demands concerted action, and so the World Economic Conference was summoned in London. Tariff truces were proposed, trade agreements were formulated, but nothing substantial came out in the end. Men of socialist or communist tendencies lay all the faults at the door of capitalism, and suggest that the sooner it is abolished the better. They point out to Russia and say that every one's bread is secure in that country, and that if the standard of living is not yet very high, the people are happy in the thought that they are all the same. The Nazis have hit upon a novel solution in Germany. They believe that Eve's place is in the home, and therefore they are asking women-workers to leave their factories and shops, thereby creating employment for the

unemployed men The men, in their turn, are asked to marry within a month of their getting the new job. An easy solution, and all-round happiness. Only, it cannot go far, for the women generally do work for which they are specially suited, and the common margin is small. In England, the Labour Party advocates the socialization of Railways and other public-utility services, such as the Banks. It is obvious that some sort of state-control or coordination of industries is necessary to deal with this vast situation. Other and less far-reaching remedies are also suggested, such as the construction of public works like roads, and the extension of electricity into villages and smaller towns, elaborate housing schemes, slum clearance and a number of others. Some economists recommend spending, others insist that money should be saved, and when economists are divided, who shall decide? On the whole, spending seems to have the day. To get workers back to work, we must create a demand,—employment is a social evil, not the visitation of a satanic scourge.

The problem of unemployment in India is different from what it is in any other country. Here, it is largely, and increasingly a case of educated unemployment. The country is not sufficiently industrialized, and the number of workers that could be thrown out of work at any particular time is not large, relative to the population. In India we have educated unemployment and appalling poverty. As to the first, it might be suggested that educated

persons form themselves into trade-unions, first on the provincial and then on an all-India basis. It is a difficult task, but it has to be done. There is no conceivable hope of raising the standard of life, when, say, the graduates of the country are willing to offer their services on fifty rupees a month. If anyone attempts to stick out for a higher salary, he shall have to go under, for another with as good a nominal qualification will gladly accept less. The third time, perhaps, the shrewd employer will advertize still lower salaries and the same thing will happen again. There could be no end to this process of under-selling in a country where the people are poor and supply far outruns demand. The employers do not realize how any man with a family (and all Indians, employed or unemployed, have families) could live decently on that pay, and perhaps they do not care. Efficiency is none of their concern, so long as money can be saved, it had better be saved in cheerful disregard of other considerations. Wealth, therefore, gets locked up, and those that were expected to set the pace for the country, set the pace to a miserable bell. The sooner this madness is controlled the better. Together with this, of course, we must have that long-cried-for reform in our education,—the provision for a vocational training. Cultural education is good enough for a country which is rich and scientifically advanced, but such an excessively cultural education is downright stupidity in India. Our schools and universities

turned out 'Babus' (the euphonious synonym for clerks) efficiently so far, and now that the Babu-market is glutted, they are turning out half-boiled useless young men galore. The country with its great resources is sleeping undisturbed, and our politicians advocate that we must not multiply our wants. That is to say, we must keep to the cottage industries, keep poor all our lives, no hospitals for us, no systems of drainage, no electricity, no scientific agriculture, no comforts and amenities of life in this year of grace 1933. It may be that the politicians do not say these things in so many terms, maybe, they do not even mean them, but the effect produced on the lazy, popular mind is not far different from what we have stated above. To live and to die in poverty, to die in misery that is perfectly inevitable, to live in a country with all its magnificent resources untapped, to die like brute unspeaking beasts because we were born in India, to live a whole life of anxious poverty, compared with which the cares of the English or the American unemployed are luxurious ease,—what unemployment problem in the world can compare to the problem we are today? And yet while the West is moving heaven and earth for its handful of out of work, we are calmly turning out our graduates,—cultured, but unable to feed themselves. This is a magnificent piece of work.

Man's fight against Disease

We know that all living things are continually engaged in a struggle with their environment, and for every healthy animal or plant which attains maturity, there are multitudes which suffer and fail. Human ill-health is merely a special case in this impressive spectacle of defeat and inadequate adaptation. In order to maintain life we have to wage an unceasing war against the forces of nature which otherwise would wipe us out. Sooner or later, however, death certainly will come; the decay of our tissues, the dislocation in the intricate process of adjustment, the defects of the secretory glands,—all these will bring about a natural termination. The great Russian scientist Metchnikoff has shown that those who die a natural death of pure old age, die painlessly, and indeed look forward to it as to sleep after a long day's work. But most of us die through accidents and disease, die, therefore, in pain, and the fight against these is unending.

Man is a very highly specialized animal and exercises an extraordinary control over his environment. He lives in the strangest surroundings, bears extremes of heat and cold, subjects his body to "unwonted pressures and the greatest dessication and humidity that any living thing can endure." He exposes himself to all kinds of infection and changes

his diet pretty frequently. Yet the bodily defences pull him through. By means of his armies of white corpuscles and anti-toxins, by the perpetual watchfulness of liver and kidneys, by protective secretions and the antiseptic gastric juice, by means of skin, sweat and shivering, he maintains this wonderful machine in effective action. Nature has placed so many excellent weapons within our system it seems we are meant to take up the battle and bring it to a successful issue.

How well we have done our part, the surgical and scientific advances of the last century and a half bear testimony. Accustomed to the sanitary precautions of a healthy modern city, it is a little difficult to picture the world in the Middle Ages when black death or plague or some other pestilence would sweep unchecked over the land and gather its toll of millions in a short space. In countries like India where medical provisions are still woefully inadequate one might still see something of the kind when cholera breaks out in a congested area. Apart from epidemics, we should also realize that in the eighteenth century, perhaps a minor operation on the little finger meant death, and that if considerable amputations had to be carried out, the barber-surgeon inflicted blows on the head to produce a happy insensibility. Anesthetics were unknown, and as the cause of blood-poisoning was not understood, there was no antiseptic surgery. Microbes and bacteria and insects as carriers of disease were unsuspected, deficiency diseases due to the lack

of vitamins in diet were still a mystery, and disorders of the mind,—the large world of the unconscious which psycho-analysis has revealed to us,—were looked upon as the workings of the devil.

Humanity owes an immense debt of gratitude to Louis Pasteur whose work transformed men's ideas and revolutionized medical and surgical practice. Before Pasteur's time, it was generally believed that there was some relation between disease and putrefaction, and such changes as the souring of milk and the alcoholic fermentation of sugary fluids. The exact nature of this relationship, however, was not known, and if sometimes minute bacilli were observed in decaying things, they were supposed to be the result and not the cause of the change. Pasteur definitely proved that change was actually due to these bacteria. From a study of yeast, he was led to investigate a disease of silkworms and found that that was due to a distinct microbe. Obviously there was some relation between a particular bacterium and a special disease. He established the point clearly in the case of anthrax (which destroyed large number of sheep), and devised a cure for it by means of inoculation.

Since Pasteur's day a whole science of Bacteriology has grown up and microbes have been classified according to their structural groups. The work of identification has gone far to discover particular disease-germs, their life-cycles have been studied, and knowledge has enabled us to find out the cure. We know now that small-pox, influenza, tetanus, cholera,

diphtheria, tuberculosis, malaria, yellow fever, typhoid and a host of other diseases are caused by these germs and that infection spreads several ways. Some microbes are more malign than others, some, like those of malaria, are highly specialized, some live inside the human body only, and some can flourish both within and without. When these parasites get into the host they do their harm in various degrees and kinds. The malaria germ, for instance, actively attacks the tissues,—it destroys the red blood-cells; the tetanus bacterium stays in the wound but sheds a powerful poison in the blood which kills the man.

Now the virulence of these microbes depends upon several things, the bacterial strain itself changes, and weather plays a great part in spreading the infection. But most important of all is the condition of the host, the reserves of strength in a man decide the way a disease is to take with him. Our blood contains white corpuscles or phagocytes which rush to the spot where the bacteria make an entry, surround them and kill them out. But that is not all. The body also responds chemically to these foreign invaders and manufactures "anti-toxins" to counteract the toxins or the poisons which are secreted by the disease bacilli. Moreover the surface membrane of the microbes themselves stimulates chemical retaliation, and substances like agglutinins, lysins, opsonins help the task of destruction. Opsonins are very interesting because they make the bacteria more attractive to the phagocytes and so hasten their doom.

This, then, is our internal fight against disease. But what if the foreign bodies prove stronger and get the better of our system? To prevent this contingency we must anticipate the battle and tune ourselves to the proper state. Now it has been discovered that these chemical anti-bodies do not disappear from the blood as soon as the disease is over, but keep circulating for some time and render us immune to a particular disease once we have suffered from it in a way. On this fact are based some of the most important branches of preventative medicine. The vaccinations against small-pox are worked according to this principle, and these have robbed this one time scourge of humanity of its terrors. It had been known that an early attack of small-pox conferred immunity from the disease in future. In 1798 Jenner discovered that persons treated with an injection of vaccinia or cow-pox virus,—a mild form of poison related to the virulent secretions in human small-pox—were prevented from having small-pox again. By forestalling the attack of the disease we have the forces of our body full-armed for the enemy. Nowadays we have several vaccines, consisting of dead or much less virulent germs which induce the mild form of a disease in order to train the blood for dealing with a violent attack of the same a little later. These germs are cultivated and are kept in suitable media. Sometimes, however, when the body is not in a position to manufacture anti-toxins, a little serum containing these (such as the serum of a horse who has been

immunized against tetanus) is introduced into the human patient. Many kinds of injections are now regularly used in surgical as well as pathological cases.

Bacteria, of course, may also be killed directly by means of disinfection, and this brings us to the work of Lister,—the antiseptic surgery. In the old days it required great courage on the part of a man to undergo an operation, before he invented the method, about half the cases of amputation under Lister resulted in death. He read about Pasteur's discoveries and concluded that the sepsis of wounds also was due to germs. In searching for a suitable disinfectant, he first of all treated the wounds with carbolic acid which was known to take away unpleasant odours from the sewage material. This solution was very strong and sometimes killed both the tissues and the bacteria. Then he tried milder antiseptics, sterilized his instruments and dressings by heating them and got striking results. The mortality from blood-poisoning fell to fifteen per cent. We have made enormous improvements since Lister's day and the modern operating theatre is a model of cleanliness. The surgeons and nurses wear white garments, masks, and rubber gloves, all sterilized, and the walls and the marble floor of the operating theatre are washable. That is why we are able to perform successfully daring operations like the extracting of a bullet from the beating heart of a man.

Our knowledge of microbe-killing agencies is

MAN'S FIGHT AGAINST DISEASE

considerable We have antiseptic mouthwashes and other disinfecting solutions with which we can flush our systems. With the help of appropriate chemicals we can kill the bacteria in our foodstuffs and clothing. The trouble is that most anti-septics kill anything living, although some substances like "the dyes trypan red and trypan blue are lethal to certain trypanosomes but harmless to ourselves"

The story is long and must include accounts of many things, from Ross's great discovery about the malaria-bearing mosquito to such civic matters as the construction of sewage farms and the scientific method of drainage No justice can be done to the theme in a short space Malaria, perhaps the most destructive ill of humanity, responsible for wiping out cities and civilizations, is now fairly under control This curious microbe whose life-cycle is completed within the twin organisms of man and mosquito can be wiped out if the insect-part of its habitat is extirpated Mosquitoes flourish in marshy districts so that if we drain them properly and cover the water with oil we can kill these insects out The importance of vitamins for our health has been brillaintly demonstrated by Sir Frederic Gowland Hopkins Diseases like scurvy, rickets and beri-beri can be easily prevented, and that nameless malaise in which we suffer from lassitude and general debility is now promptly set right If we have not found a complete cure for a fatal disease like tuberculosis, we have certainly reduced its incidence by pasteurising the milk we use, and cancer seems to

be yielding to a radium therapeutics We have discovered the importance of ultra-violet rays, the importance of open air and exercise Every civilized modern state has a ministry of health to look after such vital problems as concern the welfare of the nation Public analysts test the food-stuffs that are generally offered for sale, and there are sanitary regulations to be observed in factories In short, we have declared war on disease all along the front, and in this case at least, no one can doubt the progress of humanity

Nationalism and Internationalism

In the nineteenth century, and even before the World War, diplomacy was a picturesque and ticklish occupation. Envoys, ambassadors, and plenipotentiaries lived in great state and busied themselves with intrigue. National interests required a jealous watch-out, secret pacts had to be drawn up, the balance of power needed careful management,—indeed, there was no end of transactions, and as the national interests were not largely equivalent the world over, a spirit of bargaining and competition was kept alive. The means of communication were slow, and, therefore, the ambassadors necessarily had a considerable measure of independent authority. Barring a few exceptions, men could not move faster than the speed of a horse, nations tended to be exclusive and self-contained.

The world now has been transformed by scientific inventions. The aeroplane, the wireless, the telephone, the motor-car, the telegraph, the steamship and the railways have reduced space in an amazing manner. When Napoleon wanted to send a letter from Rome to Paris, it must have taken him as long as it did Julius Caesar hundreds of years before, but in our own day Mr MacDonald can talk with President Roosevelt on the trans-Atlantic 'phone. English foreign ministers can fly to Geneva in six hours, the

representatives of nations can easily consult their governments on an important issue, in a crisis the Prime Ministers of the various countries could themselves be on the spot in no time

This is important and must be borne in mind, for it is a fact which has transformed the character of the world. National exclusiveness because of territorial divisions is no longer possible. The globe has shrunk in dimension and the means of communication and transport cross and re-cross it in several ways. The cost of carriage from one part of the world to another is a very negligible item in the price of a commodity. An elaborate system of finance has been organised through which, say, the savings of a fruit-grower in California are utilized by a factory-builder in Jugo-Slavia, and the reckless speculation of a few stock-holders in New York is enough to dislocate the currencies of the whole world. Repercussions of a shortage or misuse of gold, of excessive Government debts or foolish commercial policies are felt by all the nations, and so are the effects of tariffs on trade.

The conclusion is obvious. The economic interests of the nations are inter-dependent, but industry and trade are still under national jurisdictions, and, therefore, under laws which are often conflicting. To avoid this clash and the loss arising out of it some sort of a consultation and co-ordination of principles is necessary. Here we have a clear problem for world-government. With expanding large-scale

industries, large and secure markets are also needed, but this security may be at once destroyed by the perverse imposition of high tariffs by a particular country. In this case, national sovereignty is a positive evil, for it inflicts great hardship on the workers of the producer-exporter nation. It is not suggested that the economic policy of a country should be entirely dictated by the needs of the other, only, there should be a co-ordination, an agreement, a security which would enable the manufacturers of the world to know at any particular time where they stand.

Apart from the necessity of a unified commercial policy, there is one other matter in which the nations can most profitably come to a reasonable understanding. Patriotism run wild precipitates wars. National rivalry in armaments is the most ruinous of stupidities, and yet without an agreement on a world-wide scale, nations may be driven to the course. Nothing could be more unendurable to a free people than the fear of foreign subjugation, so that when once a country starts building more armaments than it needs for its defence, it rouses the suspicions of others, who, in the name of security, themselves enter this fatal race. In manufacturing large quantities of arms and ammunition, a nation is merely exercising a right of its sovereignty, but it is obvious that sovereignty in this case must be limited by international considerations, if the civilized world is to be preserved from the destruction of another war. The money that is spent on armaments should rather be employed for the social

welfare of the community

Now nations are not omnipotent at any time, their powers are limited by their resources, by treaties, and by the will of the people, also, in some cases, by the force of world-opinion. In our day, small beginnings have been made towards a world-government in the form of the League of Nations. Signatories to the Covenant of the League have abjured their right to go to war without giving notice, nor will they enforce a claim which has been unanimously rejected by the Council of the League. However, what we have achieved is not much, and the threat of war is still an effective possibility. Men still think in terms of their own countries, and such is the blinding force of extravagant patriotism, that people are led to commit the very follies they would have unhesitatingly reprovèd in others. If we want peace and security in the world, national sovereignty must go. The late M. Briand started a project of European federation, but it did not gain ground, and now with him the scheme also is dead. Europe being politically the most important of continents, a European federation would obviously be the most considerable step towards the future super-state.

That the task is difficult and will not be accomplished for a long time to come let us at once recognize. It is not easy for a Frenchman or a German to regard himself as a citizen of the world first, and of France and Deutschland afterwards. Yet a World-Federation would not mean the abrogation of all

their rights by the member-states, as a matter of fact, numerous topics of home-interest will be under their respective jurisdictions. It will be only in questions of economic, financial and foreign policies that they shall have to work within defined limits of action. The task of government is a co-ordination of loyalties. Even in the present political structure of a state, there is a series of graded obligations, the higher embracing the lower. The city bye-laws, the district regulations, the provincial laws, and laws of a national validity,—we already have an elaborate legal system. The future World-Federation will have a similar though necessarily larger structure.

Will the League of Nations ever succeed in bringing about a world government? It is difficult to predict at this stage and much depends upon whether or not the League is able to maintain its prestige in the future. It has several good things to its credit, such, for instance, as the financial reorganization of Austria and the settlement of minor disputes between the Central European states. So far it really had to deal with only one question of the first magnitude,—the settlement of the Sino-Japanese trouble,—and here it has so far failed. If the Disarmament Conference which has dragged its impotent existence for two years also fails, the cause for which the League stands would have been irreparably damaged and we shall be fairly on our way to an international war. That calamity at all costs we must avert. In other circumstances, and given the goodwill of the nations,

the machinery of the League is adequate enough to form the nucleus of the future World Federation

Social Reform in India

If the countries of the world were given to nations in fee-simple without any risk of a foreign conquest or invasion, we could afford to do what we liked in our house, and India might have retained at her pleasure her antediluvian ways for another million years. The world, alas, is not so constituted. There are thieves and robbers and men ambitious and powerful on this midnight-earth, if, therefore, a negligent house-keeper chooses to snore away his life the highway-men are not to blame, supposing they take advantage of his sleep and rifle his unguarded treasurers. Indeed,—for such is human nature, and vice rarely passes without a virtuous coat and name—they might even take the *rôle* of a beneficent guardian, and steward the affairs of this sleeping Kumbhakarna,—a man or a nation. Nothing is sweeter than repose, the repose of peace, the languorous repose under torrid skies, the well-earned repose after a long day's task is done. But life is meant neither for sweetness nor peace, the condition of existence is a perpetual struggle, and a twelve-cornered house needs as many flaming swords, and as many angels to keep the watch. No people in the world could be less bellicose and more culture-loving than the Chinese, and yet now that another powerful nation has an eye on their country, they are being systematically driven to the

wall Human beings, it should be remembered, are descended from the lusty anthropoid ape, and the primeval instinct for acquisition is not yet stilled in them. We have to live first and dream the dreams of poets and philosophers afterwards, and if in the process of dreaming we have also gone to bed, it is necessary that we get up betimes.

Where are the brains of India, one might ask, and if the brains are there, as they unquestionably are, why does not the body respond to its orders, why this paralysis from shoulder to feet? It is a pathetic sight to see a people of three hundred and thirty-five millions impotent against itself, whose limbs are heavy with the accumulated poison of ages, whose life-blood is thick with swarms of bacteria spelling doom. If we still exist as a nation, more dead than alive it is true, but still existing, it is just because our size prevents us from being swiftly exterminated. Of the formidable mass of evil that is modern India what is one to say? In the face of such universal misery, such grinding poverty, such abundance of useless individuals, what is one to say? The cry goes that we must have "social reforms", and a number of enthusiastic young men band themselves into groups, touch the fringe here or wash off the first of the hundred layers at another place, and then being overwhelmed by the magnitude of the task, give it up in despair. No half-hearted attempt, no single reform can bring back health into the Indian blood. If we want to live as a dynamic power and not as a neolithic fossil

in the world, we shall have to prune and lop off our system drastically, the cob-webs of sentiment now grown into ropes nothing restraining. The evil shall have to be attacked all along the line.

To say that we cannot reform ourselves socially because of our political dependence is only to state a partial truth, for it is equally true that our subjection to foreigners is due to our demoralized social conditions. Economic, political, social and religious,—we need all kinds of reforms,—and yet a beginning has to be made somewhere. If India had a Mussolini at the helm of affairs, perhaps many a social Gordian knot had been cut by a swift blow. But we have no dictators, or at best dictators without any power to enforce their decrees, which means no dictators at all. We cannot depend upon the government to do the “setting-in-order” for us, because in the very nature of things, their interests and ours are not identical. We must ourselves break this circle of squeezing vice violently at some point and then run all along the circumference. And we must do it soon, for much has to be done, and we are already unconscionably late a-beginning.

Where should we begin? Anywhere almost, one might say, but let us first take the problems connected with the Indian women. If anyone believes that we could be a great nation without giving not only liberty but equality to our women he is thinking of that happy state which will never come into being. We need not ape the West, indeed, we should not, for

there are several Western institutions against which our racial conscience will revolt, nor could we always keep staying where we are. Here, as everywhere else, we must evolve a system that suits our genius. No women are more sincere, and more devoted to their husbands than the Indian wives, and if this attitude was the result of a conscious and willing surrender, we should be the happiest of mortals alive. Yet in how many cases is it due to a sheer helplessness? Indeed, we do not want devotion from our women; we have exacted that from them for too long. We want companionship, a feeling of equality, a relation of give-and-take, a sense of mutual admiration. Perhaps these are there even now, but now they are the result of a mature married life, not conditions preceding it. It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of courtship in the formation of a human personality and by suppressing the custom (for, alas, we lost it only in the period of our decline, we had made an art of it once) we have done incalculable harm to the youth of the country. By excluding women from all society other than that of the household we have killed our art and literature, nor can we hope to revive it again unless we live a complete life in the larger sense. Then there is the question of early marriage and its disastrous results. That we have men living in this fourth decade of the twentieth century opposing legislation aimed to correct this evil is a sad commentary on our fall. Many young Indians discover as soon as they come of age that they have inherited

both a bad constitution and a wife from their parents, and that it is almost impossible to wriggle out of these. There being no sex-education and an appalling ignorance about methods of birth-control, many also discover (that is the word) that they are 'fathers' before they had so much as an idea of the event. Henceforth the good work of proliferation goes on with placid regularity, indeed, nature is made to breed as fast as she is able to. Large families of ill-fed and ill-clothed children, cadaverous and lean, and the witless parents getting worried about them yet unable to stop further instalments of 'God's bounty'—(so children are called in meek resignation),—an Indian family is a pathetic spectacle and makes one wonder at the purpose of human creation.

In any variety of social reform, then, we shall have to emancipate the women and let them live with us as equals; we shall have to change the system of marriage drastically, and we shall have to spread a knowledge of eugenics and birth-control. Perhaps a slight breaking-up of the old family system will also be necessary, for what we gain in affection at present we lose in the development of personality. We must, each of one us, set up a standard of comfort in life below which we should strive not to fall. If a man is living poorly, it is criminal of him to keep adding to the world's stock of human beings and to his own stock of worries. And what mighty children would he produce! The problem of our racial physique is already a complicated one, for leaving the Punjabis as

a whole and a tribe or a caste here and there, we cannot be said to be physically a strong nation. Many causes are responsible for it,—our poverty, to begin with, for a marginal existence does not build ideal bodies, our early marriage, un-eugenic mating, the climate, perhaps, and a number of other things including, of course, the vegetarian diet. A diet reform in India is absolutely necessary, for a pure vegetarian meal (if properly cooked, but this is rare in India. Things are prepared according to taste, not according to science) though rich in vitamin-content, is generally poor in proteins,—the substance which builds the tissues of the body. Strict care should be taken as to what we give our children to eat, for good national health is the most priceless possession of a country.

Other social reforms such as the removal of untouchability and similar religious legerdemain will follow as the result of an orientated life. We need nothing short of a complete overhaul, a new mind in a fresh and vigorous body. Being healthy, we will try to be economically independent, in the sense that we will tap the unutilized resources of our country. At present happiness and vitality have gone from our lives. The intelligent and the sensitive among our young men find that in a world which is full of healthy, cheerful and free young people, they are weak and poor and hopeless and cramped-in on all sides. If the few better government jobs fail, they think there is nothing else to do, life becomes an

unmeaning drivel. There is no more happiness in love either, and those who care for art and literature find very little in the present-day India to satisfy their souls. Instead of working and playing lustily, they grow introspective and ask questions about death and destiny fifty years before their time. Instead of being a delight, life becomes a torture, a kind of life-in-death, a growing old before one has had time to be young. Loving their country as only sensitive and intelligent men can, they are yet driven to question bitterly the purpose of their birth in India. Misery and darkness and hopelessness surround their souls. How long will this heart-rending tragedy of our youth continue? How long will the springs of life keep dry for them, clogged with the hardened mire of ages? Why did we sleep? When shall we wake up again?

The Moods of Nature

*For, Oh! is it you, is it you,
Moonlight, and shadow, and lake,
And mountains, that fill us with joy,
Or the poet who sings you so well?*

—ARNOLD

The mind of man is a wonderful thing. It ranges over the world in its search for comfort and beauty, discovers in the hidden depths of nature mysterious meanings,—sermons in stones, as Shakespeare said—, invests trifles with a personal significance. How imperfectly were mountains and the roaring seas known before they were translated in poetry! Indeed, how little humanity itself was known before the discoveries of Shakespeare and Dostoevsky! Wilde is right when he says that nature “is always imitating art, is perpetually creating men and things in art’s image”.

There are no moods in nature, therefore, but what once were in the mind of man, although as a result of long transference we now discover them in nature herself. What we want to see in her we generally bring with us, and the same landscape gives to different individuals different degrees and kinds of satisfaction. If we are gloomy ourselves the azure depth of the sky, the grandeur of mountains, the mysterious vastness of the sea, which had otherwise invoked their appropriate emotions, leave us cold.

THE MOODS OF NATURE

*O Lady! we receive but what we give,
And in our life alone does Nature live
Ours is her wedding-garment, ours her shroud!
And would we aught behold, of higher worth
Than that inanimate cold world, allowed
To the poor loveless, ever-anxious crowd,
Ah! from the soul itself must issue forth
A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud
Enveloping the earth—*

Coleridge's generalization, however, is a little sweeping, for though ordinarily complaisant, Nature sometimes refuses to oblige, and gives back to us more or less and far different things from what we bring to her. Nature in the tropics has a personality which is not dominated by man. Standing in the midst of a Javanese forest as in the belly of a whale, enveloped by dank and suffocating vapours, thick-matted foliage underneath, and mysterious and unnameable whispers all around,—the aspect of Nature is too obviously sinister to bear another interpretation. In the temperate climate of England, however, she is like a well-trimmed garden, sufficiently under human control,—decent and obliging. But even in England she sometimes reveals her terrifying individuality. In one of the finest passages of *The Prelude*, Wordsworth records how one evening as he was rowing on a lake bounded by mountains, he saw that suddenly between him and the stars,

THE ART OF ESSAY-WRITING

*from below the level, & deep, till there
 The horizon's bent, a low, fresh, level
 huge,
 As if with vol. & every power obstruct,
 Upward to the level of the sky, & on
 And growing still in stature the green land
 Towered up like a giant, & the sky, & all
 still,
 For so it seemed, with purpose of the war
 And returned nature like a living thing,
 Struck after it, with the living world
 turned.*

In language of rare truthfulness Wordsworth has conveyed to us his feeling of awe, and of how for several days his brain "worked with a dim and undetermined sense Of unknown modes of being." But such frightening aspects of nature are not often seen in the mild climate of England, and for the greater part of his life, Wordsworth himself was concerned with suppressing this truth, and with decking out nature in the comfortable garb of Anglian morality.

There are some other aspects of nature whose tranquil beauty and mysterious calm are equally beyond any human thing. Standing somewhere in Sahara in the dead middle of night, with, overhead, a sky full of stars but no moon and in the distance a dim and partially animated darkness,—one might have an impression of eternity. The beauty of a sunrise on the snow-clad peaks of the Himalayas, just

as the silver landscape is bathed in a silent burst of gold, is beyond anything divine. The untrodden heights of the mountains reveal nature in her grandeur, the deserts in her vast solemnity

Between these two there are the plains where most of us live, and apply our anthropomorphism to the surrounding world. The seasons roll and we give each its appropriate emotional significance. Spring is the time for love, so at some places are rainy nights, or chill evenings by the household fire. We feel that they have a call which may not be denied. Autumn, the falling of leaves, the sad conclusion to the short-lived glories of summer, gives us a peculiar sense of grief. There is something spectral in the sight of bare boughs; the disappearance of familiar birds creates an intimate, though temporary sense of loss. The cold and biting winds, perhaps since Shakespeare wrote his beautiful song, make us think of human ingratitude. An Indian summer night,—when cool and gentle breezes blow, and the rays of the moon send a thrill through the sun-burnt skin, fills our minds with impossibly languid dreams. Fogs make us gloomy; to those who have to go out, sleet is exasperating. Again and again we commit the pathetic fallacy, it is part of our way, we cannot help it.

The process does not stop here. We watch the natural phenomena and feel that we are in mystic communion with the Almighty, nature, in Carlyle's phrase, becomes the living garment of God. We look at the wealth of colour-display and the

improbable radiance of an evening, and we are drawn out of our everyday world of generalizations. We feel as though we are face to face with something supernatural, something which is not usually noticed, but which interfuses the universe,—the divine principle. It is of this ecstasy of understanding that Hopkins speaks,—

*These things, these things were here and but the
beholder*

*Wanting, which two when once they meet,
The heart rears wings bold and bolder*

*And hurls for him, O half hurls earth for him
off under his feet.*

The mind of man is a wonderful thing. It strives for the larger consciousness, terror-stricken, pursued by the Hound of Heaven, it flies like Francis Thompson from man to nature, from nature to man, to obtain relief. We like to feel that we are living in a not unsympathetic world, that the unspeaking but alive objects around us realize our helplessness, that they might admit us to their beneficent ministry. The savage sees in a thunderstorm the imprecations of a dis-affected God, the Greeks peopled the elements with beautiful divinities, the prophets read in the natural phenomenon the will of the supreme; the mystics feel themselves in union with this diversified reality. Human beings, it is obvious, are not company enough for mankind.

On Utopias

Men find themselves on this earth, to what end, they cannot say. Our wishes were not consulted when we came, our wishes do not alter the fundamentals of existence. The majority of people spend their lives without thinking, and perhaps it is just as well, for ignorance is frequently a bliss, and the heritage of knowledge is likelier grief and tears. However, thoughtful men have insisted on trying to lift the veil, and if foisted, have created their own imaginary worlds in which things were not so much draped in mystery. Those who are genuinely disgusted with life are few, one such was possibly Leonardo da Vinci, and another the fitful Ecclesiastes who praised the dead "which are already dead, more than the living which are yet alive." But a great number of intelligent men have not been so much indignant with life as with the conditions of existence, and from this class we have our makers of Utopias.

The question at once arises,—can these conditions be improved? Could we for ever eliminate grief and anxiety, sorrow and death and old age, envy, greed and poverty, hatred, disease and strife? Can we perfect the moral and material circumstances of man? Is it possible to attain, or, if it has been lost, to recapture, a blissful and paradisaical existence on earth? The answers to these questions, from Plato to Mr Huxley,

could be classified under three heads. In the terminology of T. L. Peacock, we have the Perfectibilians, the optimists who believe that the universe is an ordered whole and that it is slowly but certainly marching to its destiny of ultimate perfection, then, there are the Deteriorationists, those who say that life is in a course of steady decline, that one day we will end either with a bang or with a whimper, and the third class of thinkers, a kind of centre party between these two extremes, who may be called the Statuquoites, those who believe that losses in one direction are compensated by gains in the other, and that on the whole one epoch of civilization is almost as good as any. These three temperaments have always existed, but before the Renaissance thinkers were generally gloomy, and harked back to a golden age which, they thought, had been lost for ever. Many new things have since been known and discovered, until man has come to acquire such power over the forces of nature, that civilization is as likely to be perfected as destroyed. We have our regressives again, or indeed it might be truer to say one does not know which is perfection and which the other. Mr. H. G. Wells in his latest book, *The Shape of Things to Come*, and Mr. Aldous Huxley in his *Brave New World* predict a future of scientific and technical perfection which is appalling because it is so probable.

All the writers of Utopias, however, have this in common,—they unanimously recommend some form of education. Their systems differ, if Plato

prescribes music and gymnastics for his self-denying guardians of the state, Bacon emphasizes a study of the natural sciences. Knowledge gives power and power enables men to attain the desired perfection. But this sense of power and its beneficent effects betrays that easy optimism of which we have spoken before. Men like Thomas More who believed that God would look to the beatific destiny of human beings, men like Bacon who thought that to investigate the natural phenomena was to carry out the will of the Almighty, and other latter-day thinkers like Cabet and Hertzka who never conceived the existence of a thwarting principle in the universe,—to these, knowledge was like steps in a ladder leading up to a natural ascendancy of power. But what if we know too much? What if instead of reaching a mediaeval happiness of green grottoes and rustic simplicity, we are courting the soul-less perfection of a machine? The answer is given in *Brave New World*.

In this new world of Mr Huxley the years are reckoned after Ford,—A F 632. Thinkers and humanists have gone, engineers and scientists do their work cheerfully, without being bothered by any nonsense about beauty or art. The watch-words of this state are Community, Identity, Stability. Human beings are artificially produced in laboratories, and are classified in five grades, ranging from the individualistic Alphas to the submissive Epsilons. No worry at all in this world. A little change in the mixtures, a little drop of alcohol in a particular blood surrogate,

and we have exactly the creature we wanted. The children are so trained by association and hypnopaedia as to lose all individual preferences, all modesty, all desire for privacy, all fear of death. The lower grades are subjected to a series of arrests of development, so that sixteen thousand individuals are reared from one ovary, all like so many peas, with stunted and strong bodies and no minds,—the workers of the community. Emotion is merely an orgasm of the senses. There are birth-control drills, and to be unhappy is anti-social. Anxiety is kept away by the pills of soma, and there are "feelies" to stimulate the senses. Death comes happily in a special hospital, where "feelies" and artificial music keep away fear. Existence,—mechanical and merry.

Any one who has watched the developments of a machine-ridden civilization in America must feel that this "brave new world" is a practical possibility. In this Utopia a lot has to be unlearned. The moral of Mr. Huxley's trenchant satire is, that there is something much more fundamental for man than mere happiness,—there is the individuality. We have created a Frankenstein, and he is likely to rule over us in future. Mr. Wells's predictions about what is to come in the next few centuries are also gloomy. Before happiness returns to earth again, he sees gigantic wars and epidemics in the womb of time. Modern Utopias betray no nostalgic yearning for a golden age; they are based upon the observable facts of the present and if they exaggerate a little, that

satirical exaggeration only brings home the dangers lurking in our civilization.

There are some shortcomings in the Perfectibilian method of construction. The good and the perfect are terms incapable of exact definition and vary from time to time and with the persons that happen to use them. Plato solved the problem by saying that the Perfect Good was an Idea laid up in heaven, of which the earthly 'good' was a debased copy, Morris and Mr Shaw, for instance, have other standards. The good is relative to the time, place and person of a man, and we have also to consider the motives which actuate it.

Granting, however, that some standard could be laid down for the good, there is yet that other vexing question of time. Must our Utopia of perfect bliss last for ever? Will not unrelieved perfection tire? Men have sometimes cast doubts on the possibility of eternal happiness in heaven. Could one ever be anything eternally except nothing? It is true we have only the experience of this world to go on, and in this world sorrow builds the taste for happiness, variety gives the consciousness of existence. To our earthly imagination perfect Utopias can be very dull places indeed.

But it is useless to curiously examine the construction of Utopias. Various motives have led to their formation,—a desire to escape from the sordid realities of life, a desire to reform the world by presenting it a pattern of what might have been and ought to be,

as a mere play of fancy, as a veiled criticism of the existing social structure. The human mind has always delighted, and that not in love alone, to shatter the world to bits, "and then, remould it nearer to the heart's desire," Hurling this tiny globe, the imagination of man has visited the celestial bodies and colonized the planets with the inhabitants of our earth. Cyrano de Bergerac did it ages ago, and Professor Haldane did it in our own time. In his *Back to Methuselah*, Mr Bernard Shaw travelled from the garden of Eden to 31,920 A D with his usual agility. Poets, prophets and philosophers have all given us their visions of the future. The wonderful last chorus of *Hellas*,—"The world's great age begins anew", is too well-known to need quotation. The conditions of life compel dreaming. Either one must not think and go sleep over it, or if thinking cannot be helped, nor any more can the nature of things, one must find relief from the stifling sense of oppression in the greenery of fields painted by a roving fancy.

Yet art thou still but Faustus, and a man

Poetry and Modern Life

It is a vast subject if vague, for poetry as it is being written in India today is one thing, and poetry as it is written in some countries of the West quite another. Nor is "modern life" the same the world over, we are still living in an eighteenth century atmosphere compared with the fast and giddy life of Europe and America. To write properly about European poetry alone one shall have to draw upon more than one language which would make this little essay a large pamphlet, granted that I were able and willing to do the task. But as I am neither able nor willing I can only set down a few thoughts about the subject that are uppermost in my mind.

What is the subject-matter of poetry? I suppose there would be little doubt as to the answer. Poetry has to deal with human emotions, with the thoughts and ideas of man as they are coloured by emotion, indeed, with his entire emotional responses to the outside world. A mere expression of thought divorced from feeling would give us philosophy but not poetry, a severe analysis of the workings of a man's mind would again not be poetry but psychology. But let us feel intensely the thoughts we want to express (and intensity of feeling makes us speak in a strangely beautiful idiom), let us emotionally penetrate the workings of a man's mind and we have poetry,—we

have Donne and Goethe, Dante and Shakespeare

Now human emotions are nothing new; with all their complexities they have existed ever since the time of Homer and Valmiki, if not from before (for it is surprising how we become fully conscious of ourselves and of the world outside only when they are revealed to us in poetry), and in spite of all the new discoveries of our time, in spite of all the brave inventions of science, human beings remain to this day very much the same that they were in former times. The old loves and jealousies still transform us out of recognition, the old hatreds and longings and passions are still alive in us. Wherein are we changed? For if we were, the perplexities of Othello, the heart-rending tragedy of Lear, the 'to be or not to be' of Hamlet, the helpless fatality of Oedipus, the faithlessness of Cressida would not touch us at all. We would look upon them with amused curiosity as the relics of a barbaric past. The fact that they touch us still shows the similarity or at least the possibility of a similar experience. Hardy writing in the twentieth century, and Yeats writing today have both to deal with situations which Dante and Shakespeare dealt with of old.

This is only to state the well-known truth that the greatest poetry is for all time, and has nothing to do with this or that age as such. But because, as I said before, poetry deals with our emotional responses to life and to the world outside, and as the life and the world outside always keep changing in some

ways, there are various secondary differences in poetry also. It is a fact that life is not half so simple now as it was in the days of Homer and Aeschylus, neither are we living in an age of faith to which Dante gave a sublime expression, nor, indeed, to come later still, are our lives the same as they were in Goethe's time. In our age, the stabilizing values of life are gone, we find ourselves whirling about in a world of whirring cars and dashing aeroplanes, there is neither faith nor content, and love, instead of being the irradiating emotion it used to be, is now largely a matter of sexual cant and physical orgasms. Modern poetry, therefore, if it is true to life, cannot express the serenity of Chaucer, being true to life, it has to adopt the manner and expression which sensitive poets like Eliot and Ezra Pound are forced to adopt. It needed a D. H. Lawrence to re-emphasize the mystic significance of love, and to give expression to the emotional undercurrents of consciousness.

So much for what may be called the new subject-matter of poetry. As for form, that is a question of literary revolt, of discarding the decayed and conventional vocabulary of the preceding age. To bring together a few romantic expressions and to trot them out as poetry is as easy as it is different from the thing it passes for. All real poetry has an individual expression (which is not the same thing as eccentricity), an expression which burns out of the poet's soul. Hence the new style of younger poets like Auden, Spender and Day Lewis.

All poetry may be roughly divided into two sections,—the poetry of escape, and the poetry of grappling with life. Those who are sick of the hurry and bustle, the insincerity and cheapness of existence in the modern times, want to escape imaginatively, into a land where their dreams are fulfilled, or into a by-gone age where life was as they now want it to be. The best living English poet in this style is undoubtedly Mr Walter de la Mare. Yeats has given up weaving romantic dreams for some years, and has now adopted a trenchant idiom for expressing the profoundest truths about life. T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound may be said to grapple with life in poetry, although after the struggle the former finds a sanctuary in the mediaeval ages of faith, and the latter (judging from what one is able to understand of him) seems to hold up an impossible standard of culture for emulation. There are others,—satirists, but not great poets,—the Sitwells, for example, and Roy Campbell, the inspiration for whose poetry is often derived from modern life.

Perhaps in conclusion it might be said that modern life, after all, has nothing much to do with poetry one way or the other. Great poets are always rare, and they are not rarer now than they used to be. They write poetry that is valuable irrespective of time, dealing either altogether with human emotions, or with the human emotions as reactions to the contemporary world. Those who concern themselves with describing the trappings of modern life will be

forgotten as soon as the conditions of life will change, and that will be soon enough. In the early eighteenth century in England, there was a spate of poems about dress and systems of female toilet. Who reads them now? Who in the future will read our poems about the escalators and the machines? So far as the average modern reader is concerned no form of literature interests him less than poetry.

The Necessity of Religion

In that very profound story called *The Grand Inquisitor*, Dostoevsky makes the old officer of the Inquisition say to Christ that man cannot live without worshipping something or another, and that he would rather worship bread and the source it came from than such vague and inedible objects as virtue and kindness. The instinct to venerate, to rely upon, to look up to an extra-personal entity is deep-rooted in man. Most of us are born into some system of belief, and therefore have our gods already assigned for us. The majority of human beings are pretty docile and do not either question or refute the system they inherit, and even if they do, they quickly transfer their allegiance to some other and more satisfying deities. A few daring spirits, however, put the unsettling query, and renouncing first one set of beliefs, then another, wander through the entire range of solutions offered by the intellect of man, only to end, in some cases in utter despair, but generally as helpless believers in a system they had formerly denounced. There may be those who have no faith in revealed religions, there may be agnostics and evolutionists and those who believe that there is nothing beyond the grave, in short, persons who do not care for religion in any of its accepted forms, and yet they all have idols they worship with a religious veneration. If it is neither Christ, Krishna nor Mohammed,

perhaps it will be Progress, Culture, or Humanity. We might seek salvation through fasts or through loving an earthly beloved, transferring our affections from one to the other until we fix them upon a being we have chosen to name as God. All roads lead to Rome, religion is a very wide term, and in a general sense covers both the missionary zeal of a Christian, and the Church-destroying, factory-building enthusiasm of a Communist. They have not uprooted 'religion' in Russia,—they have only substituted the dynamo for the figure on the cross

We say that religion is a necessity of the human soul, and we mean it even in the narrower sense of a belief in spiritual beings. Science has not yet explained a number of things, and even in things it has explained, few persons have the requisite intellectual strength to be entirely satisfied by its conclusions. Thus science will tell us the cause of a man's death in a particular case, but that is no answer to our agonized feelings of love, and many people would find life impossible without the larger hope of seeing their departed beloveds in the kingdom of heaven. Perhaps it is merely a delusion, but then many delusions are needed to make existence tolerable. For the problem of evil, moreover, science has no answer, it explains the causal 'how' of things but not the deeper 'why'. To any sensitive soul, the spectacle of suffering in the world is appalling. Diseases and premature death visiting people who had been leading virtuous lives (—is there a necessary connection

between virtue and happiness in life?), children suffering terrible agonies even before they committed a single sin, young men cut off in their bloom, old men dying slow deaths from paralysis or cancer, the abundance of human deceit and treachery and sordidness, evil thriving in silken ease while merit starves in stinking gutters, men inventing poison gases to murder their fellow-men, the aggressive white races of the North exploiting the dark, peace-loving races of the South,—what is any one to make of it all? And even in individual cases, why is it that everything a man does ends in frustration, while another has only to begin a task to succeed? Why should there be tragedies in love, the love of a Juliet, the love of a Phédre? Why should there be so many misunderstandings in life and so much unnecessary suffering on account of them? What is the answer to the heart-wrung cry of a righteous person?

*Why do sinner's ways prosper? and why must
Disappointment all I endeavour end?*

Perhaps there is no answer, or the answer is that the universe is unjust, that either there is no God, or that if He is, and has our governance in His hands, He is a singularly unjust and callous deity. Judged by all our human standards, the universe is monstrous and defies understanding. What are we to do? If we accept that there is no one at the helm of affairs, that evil just is, without either redress or the possibility of complaint, for most of us life would become dark, meaningless and unbearable. On the other

hand, if we believe that there is God whose ways are inscrutable, whose logic derives its force from Leviathan and Behemoth, who has laid out a plan,—however seemingly iniquitous—in which we form a part, life acquires a significance and a purpose which enable us to tolerate it. To be no more than a drifting animalcule in Chaos is a singularly hopeless destiny. What is wrong according to us, we say, may be right according to God, virtue and justice, we say, would be non-existent in a world which was mechanically perfect, for they shine against a background of sin. The best that we could do would be to pray for divine grace.

It is obvious that we do not arrive at these conclusions strictly logically, for logically there is as much reason to suppose that there is a God to look after us as that there is none. But, as we said, for most of us a strictly logical life would be impossible. Those who reject religion and go out into the world in search of more satisfying intellectual formulas, return to it after a weary toil, bruised and sore. We often accept religion in defeat,—we would cling to any thing at all that would save us from paralysing despair. None know the sweetness of faith so well as those who have lost theirs, are miserable, and find it impossible to recapture it. Is not happiness worth having even if it necessitate the imposition of some illusions? And what if they be not illusions really but our human guesses at truth? At any rate to those who are faithful they are vital reality.

Existence is only possible when life has some interest for us, and from times immemorial, the human interest in life has persisted even after death had concluded the earthly round. The cult of Spirits is of an old origin. We are still interested in the spiritual significance of life beyond this life. It is fascinating to study the growth of religious ideas, —how the primitive savage is afraid of the world around him, and finds it full of all kinds of magico-religious phenomena, how the religious is to him the secret, the potent, the mysterious and the tabu, how he exploits the sacred, how the religious ceremonies of initiation and so forth serve for him the purpose of education, of government, and of food supply. As the world advanced we developed these ideas, although some of the primitive elements still linger in several religions of the civilized world. The cow is a totem for the Hindus, and the *yagyopavita* is like an initiation ceremony. We had polytheism, prophetic and redemptive religions, pantheism, mysticism, monotheism, and in our own day, the substitution of some religion by the ideology of science. Man, as we said in the beginning, will always have something to worship, and so long as there is the mystery of pain and evil and death, this something will have to be of a spiritual character. To the majority of human beings, for happiness, for intellectual security, a religion is necessary. To say nothing of how necessary it is for the artistic activities of mankind, for great art is almost impossible without a religious impulse.

On Wasting Time

To waste time is by no means easy. Give a man wealth and freedom from anxieties, that is to say, give him heaps of time, and he will not know how best to employ it. An aged person, struck with paralysis, dragging on a useless existence, adding minute to minute, does not know how to waste time. To an expectant lover an hour is eternity,—how sluggish the moments crawl! Time hangs heavy on those whose lives are monotonous, a prisoner's life or the life of a friar within a convent,—lives whose very sameness produces a deadening effect. It is really a business man or those who believe themselves to be charged with a special destiny, "and I must do this and I must do that, and a mountain has to be moved this day and an ocean dried the other, and I have not to live long and when I die I must be famous,"—the pitiful presumption of it! . . . it is these men who are always complaining of wasted time.

As a matter of fact, not only is it not easy to waste time, it is even absurd to think of it as a possibility. Does a fish waste the immeasurable sea by living within it, or does a bird the air? We human beings are bounded by space and time, or to speak more accurately, by a space-time continuum, we are born, we grow and we die in it, "late and soon, getting and spending," it is too much with us, and

whether or not the millions of this world's so-called "time-wasters" have wasted any bit of it I cannot say but that all of them have been slowly and certainly wasted by time is a fact of which our bodies are a living testimony. This is a waste that continues ruthlessly. Born to conditions we did not choose, condemned to live in a world where our wishes are not consulted, from the moment of birth our lives are a perpetual dying. And yet we kick against this system with the petulance of a child, are so stupidly serious and self-forgetful as to talk of wasting time!

To grow out of the fetters that are imposed upon us is to attain *nirvana*, a state of blessedness whose very mark is an unchanging security. Salvation is ever thought of as an eternal bliss, free from the regulations of time and space. From the fever and fret of life, from "the fury and the mire of human veins," we want to escape into a heaven of changelessness, into a world forgotten of time. How we could ever do it, it is not easy to say; whether we lived in such a state before our births, and whether or not death will restore us to it again is more than human conjecture can divine. One thing, however, is certain. Whatever the possibility of a future *nirvana*, we can partially free ourselves from the imposition of time in this life by training our mental responses to its workings. Let us not tick off each day and moment on a watch and harass ourselves with the consciousness of a waste we cannot avoid. Why add a new to the existing troubles by having a fob or a tiny

mechanism beating at the wrist! If time must be measured, how profitable to measure it by the state of our feelings,—the slow and gradual rise and decay of the passions,—the wrinkles in the face, the passing away of those we loved and admired! To live in a continuous stream of time, with only a partial awareness of its many divisions and sub-divisions is to be partially free from the sorrows of mutability

Those who talk glibly about people wasting time are narrow-minded enough to believe that theirs are the best standards in the world. In reality, however, what appears as waste to one may be the pleasantest employment to another. A tramp who does nothing is socially despised, but the tramp may as well regard the business-man a fool who spends his life in turning the pages of a musty ledger. The world still regards a struggling artist with suspicion and contempt, because to all outward appearances he seems to be wasting his time. But what really is the end of human existence? What is our allotted work in life, the successful performers of which may be praised, and the bunglers and the delinquents condemned for squandering away their time? No one can say. We have all to make the best of a job which apparently is purposeless, and if some manage it with a briskness there is no reason why some others may not be allowed to manage it loungingly. Also, there is this consolation that many of the finest things in the world have been accomplished by those who were generally supposed to be wasting away their hour.

Culture and Education

In any discussion in which we utilize terms capable of more than one interpretation, confusion is bound to follow, and 'culture', unfortunately, is such a term. What exactly is the thing called culture? Our answers may emphasize the material or the spiritual aspect of it, and under these two general heads several combinations are possible. Culture also differs from country to country and, within limits, from age to age, though there are a few ideas which always go with the concept and with these alone we can be concerned. To identify culture with a material position in life is an obvious abuse of the term, for we have all seen poor or impoverished cultured people. The deeper we look into the matter the more clear it becomes that culture is rather a general attitude of the mind, a nobility of bearing, a graceful assurance born of convictions. This attitude is often self-acquired, but the acquisition need not be a painful one, and some are even born into it. There is, at times, within a nation a strong current of religious or philosophic ideas which influences the minds of the people and gives them a definite view of life. Culture, therefore, becomes an integrated habitual manner of thinking with a substratum of definite faiths and beliefs, even if they are negative.

As culture is not a machine-made product, it would be difficult to find two cultured persons exactly alike. We focus our imaginative reason upon the mystery of life and quite naturally illumine only a part of it, which part may be different from what the others have come to know, and even if they were identical, the difference in minds and methods will introduce a change. A cultured person need not necessarily have an elaborate system of philosophy, indeed, a man's ignorance as much belongs to the instinctive art of his life as any learning he may acquire. With ignorance we must also mention idiosyncrasy, both of which go to distinguish a man from his fellow mortals and lay the foundations for culture. Round a personality, then, gather the results of our experiments with ordinary life, and we consciously adjust our appreciative and analytical powers to all the natural human sensations evoked by beauty and ugliness, good and evil, birth and death, time and eternity. This personal philosophy may or may not be brought into conscious articulation but a cultured man lives by it just the same. It is his sheet-anchor in the bewildering shiftiness of life.

All culture aims at a harmony,—a harmony of the intellect, the imagination and the senses. As such, it has to be lived, and being lived, it produces happiness. This happiness is of various kinds, it might consist in action, in emotion, or in pure thought. But some sort of happiness it must needs be, or, to use a different term, an inward glow of

satisfaction or contentment born of a faith that is held deeply. For pain is very often caused by an uncertainty, a fearful premonition of the coming loss, an imperfect reconciliation to it, whereas if one is so far sceptical as Anatole France or so unremittently bitter as A. E. Housman, scepticism and bitterness turn into faith and acquire a peculiar serenity. Both religion and culture alike aim at a high seriousness and give a meaning to the scattered and discordant experiences of life.

Now consider the relation between culture and education. The former is supposed to be the *raison d'être* of the latter, for that which aims at practical knowledge is rather "training" than anything else. Can education, we ask, give us culture? and the answer is that in the very long run it certainly can. But partial education, the kind of education of which the advanced democratic countries make a boast, the kind of education which is compulsorily imparted in the primary and secondary schools, whatever else it might do in the way of training the electorate, certainly does nothing to promote its culture. Rather it is positively harmful, for while it takes away the age-old faiths and beliefs of the people round which their experiences in life had crystallized and formed a coherent whole, it gives them no equally abiding certainty in return. Like a great mill the schools grind quick but unsure, and turn out a vast amount of monotonous and insipid humanity. Anyone who doubts the statement may satisfy himself by

comparing a boy when he leaves a public school with a village yokel of the same age in point of character, individuality, and culture.

This really is no indictment of education; some knowledge, like that of personal hygiene, must be made common to all. What we do, however, maintain is that while a complete education accompanied by a critical insight and mental coordination produces a fine culture, half-education produces none and destroys the chances of an inferior culture which might have been possible otherwise. For the fact is that there are two kinds of culture, and real culture of two kinds only,—that of the genuine aristocrat, including, of course, the aristocrat in intellect, and excluding the parvenu, and that of the poor people to whom has been promised the kingdom of heaven. Mark the difference between culture and education as shown by the 'educated' Philistine, and the cultured types we have mentioned above. The educated man is anxious to expound, to attack, to defend, to lay bare his innermost thoughts on the slightest provocation. The men of culture desire silence and have an innate personal dignity and reserve. The superiority of the aristocrats is easy to understand, but the poor rustics also possess distinct personalities, are kind and God-fearing, have a definite scale of values, judge things at first hand and digest all these into a coherent system. Even if they merely accept the prevailing ethic and religion according to whose implications they live, their wisdom in most matters is uncanny, and the

original way of saying things testifies to their thinking. At peace with themselves their harmony is enviable.

The greater part of India's population consists of such 'cultured' peasantry. The philosophies that sprung in our soil have sunk into their bones and flourish in them better than in the musty text-books of scholars. If our ideals differed from those of the energetic West, they were not for that reason worse, not at least in their own time. It is sad that we have not watered them with new life, for the necessary process of adaptation has been neglected unconscionably. But this is not the criticism made by those who hold the power in their hands, they rather suggest that India is unfit for self-government because the people are uncultured, are uneducated,—the statistics say so! There are things, alas, which the footling system of statistics is unable to record, and it needs more than a mathematician to prove that culture and education are identical. Perhaps in democracy it is only the shell that matters,—the conch-shell with its spirals ending in nothingness, and making a great boom when any wind is blown through it. Hats off to culture wherever it be, but only a fool or an ignorant person would maintain that the selfish and self-centred *Daily-Mail*-reading Englishman, spoon-fed in his opinions but proud to have a vote, is culturally superior to the kind, affectionate, hospitable, thoughtful but illiterate Indian villager. Apart from the issues of political democracy, the problem is serious

enough for ourselves. One of the fundamental democratic assumptions, that all men are equal, must, therefore, have equal opportunities, and, God-willing, shall benefit equally, is wrong, and let us beware how we apply it to education. Some knowledge will certainly have to be imparted, but it is not yet realized in India how difficult the task may prove to be, how important is happiness, and, therefore, culture, and the risks we run in venturing upon half-schemes of a partial education. It may be too easy to take away the sweet if coarse bread from the people and fill their gaping mouths with howling winds and ashes.

On Superstitions

As I was dressing for dinner to which my friend had invited me the mirror suddenly fell from my hand and shivered into pieces, then someone sneezed, and as I stepped out of the house a cat crossed my way I pride myself on being free from superstitions, but the events of that evening were a little disturbing I had not gone far when a one-eyed fellow passed me on the left, and when we actually sat down for dinner, it was found out that of the fifteen persons who had accepted the invitation, two had unexpectedly absented themselves As I returned back home I could not help reflecting on such a strange concatenation of unhappy auguries, and wondered if some calamity was really going to happen to me However, nothing untoward took place Do superstitions come true to only those who have a faith in them? My thoughts on the subject seemed to gather round a few points

Superstitions hark back to something primeval in man At a time when even the visible and commonplace phenomena of nature were full of unsolved mysteries and wonder, when, all of a sudden, there was a terrific rumbling noise in the sky, and lightning, with an unaccountable blaze, smote the cup of heaven in twain, when the very drops of water which the clouds discharged on the earth in sharp intermittent

arrows were full of a *mysterium tremendum*, fear was a constant attitude of the human mind, and our ancestors, the savages, overcome by awe, feeling their own impotence against powers which were too strong for them, anxious to be in harmony with forces on which they felt their existence to depend, invented, with such logic as they could command, the primitive magic and the ritual propitiating the gods. They worked on the simple principle of analogy and association, two things were seen to go together, hence they were supposed to be connected as cause and effect, or, at least, if one of the two was an object possessing *mana*, or *orenda*, the other was taken to be its abode, and in some peculiar way sacred to it. Thus in a primitive society in which the only known way of making fire was by the friction of wood, the savage naturally supposed trees to be sacred to the fire-god and regarded them with a special veneration. A tree which had been struck by lightning was considered as charged with a double or triple portion of fire, for did not the mighty spark from Above enter the trunk? Quite logical from this premiss to conclude as the Thompson Indians of British Columbia do, that if you wish to set fire to the houses of your enemies, you have to shoot at them arrows which are made either from the wood of such a tree or to which splinters of such wood are affixed, the implication being that this wood is so charged with fire that it would ignite whatever it struck, the mere concussion sufficing to explode it like gunpowder. The

superstitious reverence which the ancient people of Europe paid to the oak was due to the fact that this tree more than any other was struck with lightning. Examples could easily be multiplied. The reasoning in such cases, we might observe, is quite sound, the conclusion is vitiated because of the false premisses on which it is based. Such, then, were the tentative attempts made by our forefathers to cherish and protect the species from the spiritual dangers which, they thought, were threatening it. They tried to win over the powers to their side by such appropriate gestures as were considered to please them. Superstitions have a basis of magical belief, and what we would now call, supernatural efficacy. We have made great advances in knowledge since those days, where our forbears needed the aid of magical arcana, we need only an electrical switch-board and press-buttons. And yet in spite of all our astounding discoveries, the universe has not yet been altogether denuded of mystery, many a link is still missing in the great causal chain in which we wish to bind this intractable sphere. If life is not under imminent and hourly danger of death, if much human suffering has been happily eliminated, all is not yet accomplished, our endeavours, even now end as often in success as in failure, the universe, as Mr Aldous Huxley will put it, is still a universe of *non sequiturs*. In moments of darkness and difficulty, many of us, some even those who are learned and know better, surprisingly enough, come to have

a faith in (or, at least, nurse a hope in the benevolent goodness of) the occult powers, which can only be described as superstitious. During many an emotional or spiritual crisis in man, the rational faculty is in temporary abeyance, it is then that darkness speaks to darkness, and superstition is the language thereof. In the uneducated people it might take the form of fetishistic belief, among the educated, a faith, a larger trust that somehow good will be the final goal of ill. Those who are religious might recall at such times a rite neglected or an oblation unoffered, and then superstition becomes the old intimidating demon of the past. It is then that we realize that our modern security is not complete and that our modern reason is not so rational as we would like to think it to be.

This, however, is not the only way superstitions originate. The primary feeling of mystery and wonder may not lead to the ideas we systematize as those of fear and awfulness, it might create in us, what Professor Otto calls, a "numinous" mood, a mood of instinctive reverence towards the god-head. The moon, with all its varying beauty creates such feelings. It touches the soul directly through our eyes and indirectly through the dark and mysterious surge of the blood. Our sudden joys and inexplicable miseries, spasms of fear or fits of remorse are "moods, of which the more gravely numinous may be hypostasized as gods, the lighter, if we will, as hobgoblins and fairies." Many are the superstitions, therefore, that get connected with the two orbs that illuminate the world.

Our mind not only makes a heaven of hell and a hell of heaven, it also makes myths, and throws out into the light of day creatures itself has produced

Many of the superstitions of our age are survivals from the past. The North European custom of decorating the house with green at Christmas is an instance to point. The convention of shaking the right hand when friend meets friend is probably an old magical gesture, once fraught with potent good, now merely an expression of politeness and courtesy. Society does need some customs; to adopt and modify the old ones saves the trouble of inventing a new. In many of the common decencies of life as well as in the weightier matters of morality, we have many of the old savage taboos which, disguised as an expression of divine will, or clothed in the robes of a false philosophy maintain their credit long after the crude ideas out of which they sprang have been discarded, while, on the other hand, many of our ethical precepts and social laws, now resting on the solid basis of utility, probably drew their original sanctity from some system of superstition.

Together with the old we have our new superstitions also. Mascots have replaced the totems and witches have left us to the milder sophistications of fortune-telling. Superstitions arouse in our minds a romantic curiosity and every now and then we relish an adventure into the Alicean Wonderland, where the law of causation which so frigidly regulates our lives, is temporarily suspended.

On Matters Sartorial

Supposing Queen Victoria returned to life and instead of meeting the bashful and elaborately-suited girls of her time saw Miss Modern in shorts playing hockey; supposing Queen Elizabeth revisited her ancient court and instead of finding knights in taffeta jackets laced with pearls met gentlemen in tails at the levee,—our visitors from the next world would not easily realize that we were the same old human beings which lived in their days. Clothes work wonders. We need not go to the problematic for an illustration, let a man dress his wife like an Eskimo and notice the change. How interesting if we were required to go to office in the robes of a Melanesian,—provided, of course, that he has a robe! Could we picture a modern army dressed in those wonderful Roman coats-of-mail? What happiness and cordiality would be introduced in the gloomy international deliberations at Geneva if the statesmen were rigged out in the most picturesque historical costumes of their country! Let a Russian come out like a Cossack, an Englishman as a Hussar, a Turk as a Bedouin, a Peruvian, in the forgotten glory of the Incas. The atmosphere will be electrified. Children will huddle in street-corners when they see a representative from the Northern countries walking past them in a bearskin, the golden and friendly plumes of the Chilean minister will draw

them from their retreat, the unpretentious costume of the Japanese will leave them cold. Nations will be grouped according to their sartorial impressiveness. The meetings will gain in character and the brandishing of a stick by an Indian (just as a flourish in debate) and the dark eye-rollings of a Teuton in mediæval dress will swiftly conclude an argument. It is, indeed, impossible to over-estimate the importance of dress,—this trappings of civilized life is pretty akin to the substance of civilization.

Much can be written on clothes,—perhaps with a little management they might furnish a text for any subject at all. As the outer covering of reality we might take them to be the symbol of our universe. Carlyle has already manipulated the point in his philosophy of clothes. Look at women and their unending variations on this simple theme,—vanity of vanities. How ugly and unattractive human beings may be in themselves that we have to deck the bodies in the winding comeliness of silk and serge! Like the convincing speech of a defending counsel, clothes cover our imperfections. And also,—contradictory nature of things—very often the beauties too. We have to feel the skin before coming to the heart of a juicy orange. Covers on covers,—behind the human body there lurks an intangible soul which needs further unclothing. For there are men-sewn clothes as well as God-given, "consider the lilies of the field, how they grow,—they toil not, neither do they spin and yet . . . that even Solomon in all his

glory was not arrayed like one of these." We might look at the matter theologically,—the fall of our ancestors and how they grew conscious of shame and invented the imposition of a dress, and how the devil still lives in a dress, for everytime we lie or prevaricate we have 'to dress up' the matter and truth was always known to delight in unaffected nudity. We 'uncover' a lie, take off the vanish, come at the truth,—the great Original, indeed, seems to be a vast nakedness. But let us come down from the heights and look at the national and economic importance of clothes. There has been a War of the Roses, the Puritans in England were against all forms of gaiety, including the use of ribbons and laces, the Indian Mutiny broke out of a greased cartridge, in our own time the Gandhi cap and the red shirt have often invited chastisement, and in the Europe of today there are at least three distinct shirts, the red, brown and black, which are identified with as many movements and countries. But it is to be regretted that in the annals of history no wars have actually taken place purely because of a drastic dress reform,—a civil war, for instance, because the soldiers refused to give up their satin trousers in favour of the striped ones of flannel, or a national war, because one country refused to adopt the fashion in hats which the other wanted to impose upon it. If international diplomacy gets better of the old-world causes of war, perhaps we might look forward to some such delightful event in the future, for it is difficult to crush out completely

the fighting instinct in man. In the past, minor happenings of this kind have taken place, such as the wholly admirable resistance of the older Afgans to preserve their roomy trousers, so hospitable to the vermins, which the misguided zeal of King Amanullah wanted them to discard. The dress reform in Turkey was, we think, unaccompanied by such historic demonstrations. In India there are people who would still maintain *purdah*, and one can almost picture truculent Brahmins going up and down the country, fanning a revolt if the wearing of *dhobi* was compulsorily prohibited in favour of a garment, convenient and business-like. Prejudices are hard to die, even in the matter of clothes. The Scotch regard the kilt as many Mohammedans regard the fez with an excessive sentimentality.

There is no end to the topics we might start under a 'sartorial' heading. Much could be said on the economic importance of clothes,—how the changing fashions in ladies' dresses keep many an industry going, how in the West fashions change with the seasons or half-seasons, and there are different dresses for the different times of the day. 'Society' is set astir if, for instance, the Galleries Lafayette at Paris announce a new style of gown for the autumn evenings. In India we have simpler tastes, perhaps we could create some employment if, as a nation, we determined to have an ampler wardrobe. Dress could also be treated from the hygienic standpoint and somewhat may be said about the relation of clothes

to business efficiency. But these are things which any body interested in garments can find out for himself, and so we need not labour the point.

Charming dresses attract us all, and most of us strive to look spruce if we can manage it. If we do not, we should try to, for shabbiness is not an attractive social quality and is cousin german to uncleanliness. Where it does look pleasing is where we expect it to be, for a neglect in dress is the privilege of the poet, the artist and the philosopher

The Indian Nights

They are mysterious, calm, and beautiful,—these Indian nights. In a country where, a particular season excepted, the days are uniformly garish and sunny, the ever-changing complexion of night introduces a pleasing variety. But while the weather is a perennial topic of conversation in England, we bear the diurnal charm of our seasons more or less silently. The graces of nature are so nearly expected and so invariably the same that although we feel their beauty, we rarely have that shock of delighted surprize which the fitful days and nights of a northern clime bring to the inhabitants of Europe. Nature with us is an accustomed background of life.

Look at our moonlit nights. There is hardly anything in nature more tranquil, more unearthly in its beauty, but we let fall its loveliness on our souls silently as lying supine on our beds we watch the slow passage of the moon. Moon-gazing is peculiar to the tropics. In England, for instance, either the fogs or the clouds cover the sky, or else it is much too cold for people to stay out and watch the heavens. And in any case, the moon keeps rather low on the horizon, and, therefore, does not quite infuse the landscape with the beauty we generally discover in India. Here, if anywhere, Cynthia rides her dragon yoke across the skies. In the evening, how enormous and pale she

looks in the East, and then, how swiftly, even while you are gazing at her, she mounts up and up in the heavens, and asserts her cool and enchanting sway over the world! She, of all the other celestial bodies, touches every object to beauty, and gives men a maddening frenzy Hence the "lunatics",—persons touched by Luna, the goddess of the moon

For the fact is, that the waters as well as our hearts respond in a peculiar manner to the call of this divinity The Aryans recognized in the sun the source of all life, and, therefore, worshipped him, but the moon is to most of us the source of much beauty, and we pay her an instinctive homage This world of ours whose ugliness and vices are unmercifully revealed by the searching rays of the sun, becomes magical when dichotomized into the twin halves of light and shade by the rays of the moon Divine artistry!—the very trees which stood solemn and green and vociferous during day, are now calm and exactly silhouetted as though they were fixed in a pose,—the painted trees upon a painted landscape The rippling waters of a lake shimmer under a full moon, as if they had drawn a silver mantle over their blue nakedness The distant peaks of a mountain become etherialized, those that are near take the gaunt aspect of a tremendous personality The sea dissolves its outlines and converts itself into vast masses of thin mist, as if it had changed its substance into clouds of silvery dust and was attempting to reach the moon Strange that but one small planet of this immense

universe should have ridden the heavens and transformed all sublunary things to beauty that passeth understanding

The moonlight in the tropics is the ideal scene for love-making. It puts toys of amorous desperation in the brain. The angularities of life as well as of the body get softened in the mellow lustre shed from the sky, the landscape outside is perfectly attuned to the emotion within. "In such a night", *Triolus* would have certainly sighed towards the Grecian tents where *Cressida* lay watching the moon. "In such a night," when two loving breasts beat against each other, the bodies seem to dissolve away and the fluttering souls meet and melt into one. The moon liberates the romantic within us.

I watch her a long time from the roof of my house until filled with anguish and beauty, gradually I fall into a sleep. The *papiba* pours his plaintive cry into the ear of the night and wakes me up, when I discover that from my left, leaning just above a tree, this goddess had been shedding on me her arch and coldly beautiful smile. I am not writing anthropomorphically for ornament, in my sudden surprize I feel so completely that it is the face of a beautiful damsel, clad in mild azure, and not the moon who is looking at me. I think that of all the mythological fictions, that about *Diana*, *Semele*, *Cynthia* is the most natural and convincing. The night is intensely calm, I almost feel the pulse of the universe. I sit up in my bed and wonder how enchanting the full moon

looks at Tahiti . . .

The moon westers low, and in the East just where she stood in the evening, now stands a star, of more than sidereal lustre, while at the horizon's rim there is the silent burst of a rose, paling into the green and azure of the heavens—Aurora will shortly retrace the steps of Semele

Then there are the dark nights—There is no moon and the stars alone shine to each other across the awe-inspiring inter-stellar immensities—When Keats wrote,—

The moving waters at their priest-like task

Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,

he gave us a simile that brought before our minds a picture of the world with all its multitudinous seas beating against long stretches of continents,—a writhing line of white washing away the sins of the earth—Lying on my bed on a moonless but starlit night, I realize intensely the mystery of this universe in which our whirling planet is no more than a speck of animated dust—As I look at a throbbing star millions of miles away, there flashes before my mind a composite night-picture of the globe, in which I see half the human beings in various stages of sleep, from the prelusive tiring of their bodies in the dancing-halls to the tired turnings in a bed—And while at one end of the earth dawn is stealing over waking eyes, at the other, day's death is sealed by the silent approach of night—All this, though analysed in so many words, forms a swift, complete and vaguely distinct picture

THE ART OF ESSAY-WRITING

like the Whistler night-piece in the National Gallery. Lines of poetry get attached to different scenes, and as this vision of the sleeping world flashes before my eye, I cannot help murmuring to myself that phrase in Housman about the dead man who

*Has woven a winter robe,
And made of earth and sea
His overcoat for ever,
And wears the turning globe*

If the dark starlit nights bring to the mind the mystery of the universe, the dark and cloud-capped nights of the rainy season give us a nameless but a very real fear. Nature is obscurely alive, and the world about us is seething with sound. Such must have been the primeval darkness within which lay spurting for birth the first day and life. Suddenly there is a rumbling of thunder, and lightning divides the midnight dome of heaven. Against the fury of the elements, man realizes his utter insignificance. It is best to huddle yourself against a loving bosom and go to sleep. Soon there will be morning, for morning always comes, after the darkest night, as well as after the deepest sorrow of a man's life, and we, getting up from our bed of ignorance and pain, like

*"the innumerable choir of day
Welcome the dawn"*

Manners maketh Man

It is no perversity to hold that in social relationships, manners are far more important than either the morals or the character of a man. We often meet others for a short while,—there is such a large round of business and other interviews, and even in our intimate circles, not all have a chance of knowing us intimately. How difficult it is to get at the proper character of a man! but the consolation is that it is not often necessary. Most of the transactions of life can be based on a superficial acquaintance. The “morals” are a thorny problem, so much depends on the personal outlook (which in turn depends on heredity, environment and education) of a man, so much upon particular circumstances. We could not go far if we made any rigid morality the basis of social relationships. Human beings are a very mixed lot indeed, and it is well to realize that there is no evil which has not its shade of good, nor any good which is without a shadow of iniquity. However, if anything is important for genial company, it is manners, a code of decency, a respect for the feelings of others, a sense to recognize the limit, qualities, in short, otherwise associated with a gentleman. Everytime it is manners maketh man.

The Elizabethans were fond of addressing their friends as “Sweet master so-and-so”, and the term

"sweet" very properly expresses the virtue on which all good friendships are generally based. We do, of course, like our friends to have the same tastes and opinions as we ourselves possess, but that really is not essential, and is sometimes even undesirable, for variety of tastes makes life richer and gives argument for conversation. But a "sweetness" of discourse, an appreciation of the other man's point of view, a constant awareness of the feelings of the other,—these, indeed, are essential, and there can be no deep friendship without them. After all, each one of us has to solve his or her individual destiny, and in the ultimates of life we must, perforce, be lonely. The political opinions of our friends, their literary and ethical outlook, their tastes and likes and dislikes are of no more help to us than those of the man in the moon. We shall have to discover it all for ourselves with an expense of spirit. So long, therefore, as human associations are of any use, so far as they go, let them be pleasant and harmonious. The proselytizing zeal of a neophyte has something very unmannerly about it. An object can be viewed from many angles, and only a fool would say dogmatically that his vision was all-embracing. Live and let live, we may be right, but so may be others, and where nothing is known for certain, it is good to take things with a cultured charity.

Although we have distinguished between manners and character as though they were two things apart, fine manners are very often an outward

expression of an inner nobility of soul We say "often", because sometimes a good behaviour may be hypocritically assumed, although hypocrisy, if it is put on with the intention of avoiding pain, may be rather admired than reproved Leaving this apart, manners generally express character We cannot be gentle and considerate towards others unless we recognize the necessity of such conduct, perhaps under every act of kindness, there lies a sense of human love or toleration We do not often realize it, for long habit makes us forget the origin It would seem that a well-behaving and un-hypocritical bad man is really a contradiction in terms The world calls a man good or bad for such unessential reasons, for example, as private licentiousness or an occasional excess in drink But this is a hopelessly narrow ethic, so long as a man does not make himself a public nuisance and has charming manners in society, he is socially desirable Like the pleasant man in Stevenson, he spreads happiness around him, and his entry into a room is like a new candle lit in it Indeed, some of the greatest men in the world have led, what the foot-rule moralists would call an immoral life, but leaving a few who were sour (and to that extent less great), what sweet manners had they! There is no comparison at all between a cultured libertine and a bigoted Puritan, and Puritans, alas, are not inclined to be charitable

Manners maketh man, for as to the grab-and-get system of personal satisfaction, the animals know

it as well as we The progress of civilization has been one long effort to tutor human wildness, although, of course, it cannot be said that the beast has been tamed very effectively There are eruptions of terrible anger or savage hatred or swinish lust, even with the best of men, but reason and a thousand other considerations impose a check on them and restore the trained equilibrium There are social codes of behaviour, elaborate codes for special occasions, until in the manners of a court, we come to a highly polished though artificial ceremonial Artificiality has a very peculiar charm of its own, French society in the reign of Louis XIV, English society in the eighteenth century, the Rococo period generally, delight us by their artifice of exaggerated ornament When this process has gone too far, there is heard an opposite cry,—Rousseau's cry,—back to nature—the cry for spontaneous behaviour in life However, no one would like to see us revert to the original savage condition; some sort of manners must always be Indeed, our long schooling has not been in vain Several good manners have sunk into our souls, and to an unsophisticated person come naturally There are not many could lay claim to this instinctive gentlemanliness, those who have it are fortunate, for there is an infallible something in them which tells them where to draw the line, and how and what to do in any particular situation What such a sensitive soul does with ease, a laborious education does for others Ever since we begin to act consciously, we are taught to do

things in a particular style

Perhaps manners maketh nations also, for though the fundamental modes of good behaviour are generally the same the world over, there are geographical variations in most other things, and some manners are distinctly tell-tale. The way we respect our elders, the way we address them, the way we treat women in society, the way we eat, our methods of prayer, the way we entertain our guests and in numerous other things, there are several codes of behaviour in the world. Perhaps there may be two broad divisions,—the Eastern and the Western, but there are various shades, currents, cross-currents and over-lappings. It is probable that the manners of the village-folk have a similarity throughout the world, and although that would not apply to those who live in cities, the industrial population of the world has also some common traits. Then there are layers through time. There are manners dead and buried with civilizations that are gone, and there are legacies from the past,—links which connect us with Vedic India and with Periclean Greece. How kaleidoscopic is this procession of humanity through the ages! What vanished etiquette, what picturesque ceremonial, what forgotten curtsies, what colour and grace and charm! The paraphernalia of worship, the procedure of love,—duels and tournaments and *Swayam Vaa*, the ways of marriage,—what infinite variety! Manners maketh man. *O mores!*

On Invective

Invective is both a delight and a necessity.

To take the delights first. What exquisite pleasure men find in heaping rounded abuse on the head of an enemy! Language is sickly and pale without the help of these colourful words, invective is truly the sauce and spice of speech. Now spices and sauce are not indispensable for food, no more are terms of abuse for ordinary conversation. But we are not always content with common fare. To enjoy a meal we need Chutneys and to take delight in language we have to be abusive sometimes. Just for the fun of it. For abuse does not necessarily presuppose malice premeditated or withering hatred or any other of these astringent emotions. It just comes to the mouth welling up from some hidden source in a man's being, it is pleasing in sound, delightful in utterance, harmless in intention. No offence, intended, no offence, none in the world.

Indeed so far from being an offence, an invective is often a term of endearment. It is obvious that you can't abuse everybody with impunity, some you can, and these are of the inner circle. I have known friends bandying such picturesque and powerful abuse at each other one could have sworn it would end in blood. It ended in the cheerfulness of smiles. Were it not for the sheer delight of the thing,—aesthetic

delight, perhaps, in inventing new terms of abuse, in forming strange word-combinations, in slowly tasting the euphony of the grand old ones,—if it were not for the thing's delight, I do not know why people should indulge in an orgy of vituperation. Several terms of abuse are utilized to express a more than ordinary content with life, 'very good' does not half convey the idea that 'damn good' does. Similarly, 'blood' and 'blast', appropriately introduced, signify one's meaning in all its undiminished vigour. Inveective, it would seem, comes natural to man, for when talking in the company of women or in a polite circle, we have to make a conscious effort in using a select vocabulary.

All languages are not equally suited for abuse. By their sound, their syntax, their capacity for long word-formations some are better than the others. Inveective in Latin, for instance, sounds extraordinarily impressive. German, I suppose, would come next. An irate Frenchman is hard to beat in the dramatic fervour with which he deals out abuse, but the language itself has rather a genius for polished and amorous conversation. Of the Indian languages there is one which stands out above the rest in this particular, and its distinction is well-known. Strangely enough a language is in some ages more and in some less capable of being used for vituperative purposes. Words that are not in common demand go out of use and gather a pedantic aroma about them. Satire, irony, innuendo or sarcasm may replace hearty, downright

abuse The culture of a period invents or finds out its own vocabulary Where there is least affection, invective is just invective, plain and full-blooded. In this respect we may remark how far the powers of the English Language have declined since the days of Elizabeth The Elizabethans had the gift of the magical phrase, and among other things it remains Shakespeare's distinction that Falstaff is the greatest master of abuse in literature In the Puritan Revolution that came after Elizabeth, and in the reign of Charles II, there was a spate of abusive lampoons on the Puritans and the Cavaliers alike, from one to the other In this flood of broad-sheets, there stands out a book, solid and formidable, a classic of abuse Prynne's *Histrio-mastix* cost its misguided writer, among other fines and penalties, his pair of ears also The book is a virulent attack on plays and all other kinds of pleasurable activities Here is a sentence (or half a sentence, for one would be too long) on the pleasure-loving youths of his age.—

"Pitty it is to see how many ingenious Youthes and Girles; how many young (that I say not old) Gentlemen and Gentlewomen of birth and quality (as if they were born for no other purpose but to consume their Youth, their lives in lascivious dalliances, Playes and pastimes, or in pampering, in adorning those idolized living carcases of theirs, which will turn to earth, to dung, to rottennesse, to wormes-meat ere be long, and to condemne their poore neglected soules) casting by all honest studies, callings, imployments, all care of Heaven, of salvation, of their own immortall soules, of that God who made them, that Saviour who redeemed them, that Spirit who should sanctifie them, and that Common-weale that fosters them, doe in this

idle age of ours, like those Epicures of old most prodigally, most sinfully roit away the very creame and flower of their yeares and their dayes in Playhouses, in Dancing-Schooles, Tavernes, Ale-Houses, Dice-houses, Tobacco-shops, Bowling-allies, and such infamous plices, upon those life-devouring, time-exhausting Playes and pastimes (that I say not sinnes beside), as is a shame for Pagans, much more for Christians to approve ”

Prynne's flood is unending

From literature and religion, let us come to politics. Invective, pointed and neatly phrased, is one of the most effective of political weapons. Here again modern England shows a decline from the past. Party-animosity does not run so high now as it used to in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. One of the most telling examples of political abuse is the following criticism of Lord John Russell by D'Israeli. "If a traveller were informed", he said, "that such a man was leader of the House of Commons he may begin to comprehend how the Egyptians worshipped an Insect." The classic of violent political invective, however, is the criticism not by but on D'Israeli. O'Connell was one of the most celebrated orators of his time, and in a speech in 1835 replying to an attack by D'Israeli on himself, he said,—"In the annals of political turpitude there is not anything deserving the appellation of blackguardism to equal that attack on me He calls me a traitor. My answer to that is, he is a liar. He is a liar in action and in words. His life is a living lie. He is a disgrace to his species. What state of society must that be that could tolerate such a creature . . . ?

His life, I say again, is a living lie. He is the most degraded of his species and kind, and England is disgraced in tolerating or having upon the face of her society a miscreant of his abominable, foul and atrocious nature. If there be harder terms in the British language I should use them, because it is the harshest of all terms that would be descriptive of a wretch of his species. His name shows he is by descent a Jew.

He possesses just the qualities of the impenitent thief who died upon the cross, whose name, I verily believe, must have been D'Israeli. For aught I know, the present D'Israeli is descended from him, and with the impression that he is, I now forgive the heir-at-law of the blasphemous thief who died upon the Cross."

It is unnecessary to say that biting invective does not necessarily need a large canvas. Blake's epigram on the dishonest publisher Cromek is as telling as any other ten times its size.

A petty sneaking knave I knew

Oh, Mr Cromek, how do ye do?

Carlyle succinctly summarized Herbert Spencer by saying that he was "the most unending ass in Christendom." Oscar Wilde expressed his opinion of the Bible by remarking, "When I think of all the harm that book has done, I despair of ever writing anything to equal it." Rev. Sidney Smith had an excellent hit when he said to a young man who said, "If I had a son who was an idiot, I would make him a parson",—"Your father was of a different opinion."

Othello loved Desdemona heart and soul. His jealousy was the very natural counterpart of his love. There was much in life he could endure,—

*Yet could I bear that too, well, very well
But there, where I have garner'd up my
heart,*

*Where either I must live, or bear no life,—
The fountain from the which my current
runs,*

*Or else dries up, to be discarded thence !
Or keep it as a cistern for foul toads
To knot and gender in !*

This utter and reliefless agony of soul, incapable of expression Invective alone gives vent to it partially.

bottom, or Katar Singh (I do not like belligerent names, and I would hate to be called 'Katar' by those whom I admired) or Salar-i-Jung I would have made all haste to get myself re-christened. I could not have been comfortable in such commonplace names as John Smith and Ram Lal either. Ram Lal,—how quiet and self-effacing that sounds! And of course there are thousands of Ram Lals, each, I think, as like the other as the peas in a pod. At least I have no curiosity to know anything about a Ram Lal who is introduced to me. What, indeed, in the world is there to know about him? The name is absolutely definitive, pronounce it high or low or in any other operative timbre,—you cannot put colour into these six self-sufficing words. Ram Lal. There is an end to it. We have Ram Lals from times immemorial, they are now, as numerous and as undistinguished as ever, and so will they be to the end of the world.

It is certain I could never bring myself to be a Ram Lal. There is much, very much in a name, and as I would not suffer a commonplace designation, nor would I, I was saying, change my present designation for another name, however astounding. Having lived as so-and-so for a number of years I seem to regard so-and-so as an intimate piece of private property. I am offended, therefore, if some one mispronounces my name, and if a friend puts a *oo* instead of *u* in spelling it, I take it as an insult not to be pardoned easily. To have a name of imposing sound, that becomes sweeter as it is shortened, until it can convey anything

processions, of music, song and pantomime are opened up by such a trio as Mela Ram, Barati Lal and Nautanki Mal''' I can see all of them, they seem to be such old acquaintances I can see Pandit Mela Ram, holding his little girl by the hand and carrying his youngest son on the left shoulder, the brat occasionally drumming on Panditji's head in no uncertain manner, and two of Mela Ram's older boys walking at his side, tugging at the corner of his shirt,—all marching to the Ram Lila fair at Allahabad Munshi Barati Lal is seen instructing the band, arranging the procession, and serving at the feast in a marriage party He has an engaging smile but generally wears a look of importance and walks swaggeringly alongside the band-master as the marriage procession passes through the streets of a city Needless to say that he never misses these functions Lala Nautanki Mal I see in the first ring of spectators at a *Swang*, wagging his head at the music as a dog wags its tail on seeing its master He is mightily pleased with the show, is vociferous in his applause and gives occasional gifts to the singers whose art touches him. These three persons live true to their names

I do not pretend to understand all the secrets of nomenclature and it is still a mystery to me why some people are called Chadami Lal It is a greater mystery still why in the names formed after coins the leap was at once from a farthing to a guinea, for the only other name derived from this source is Asharfi Lal Now it might be said that suitable combinations

with coins are not possible and to some extent it certainly is true. But I challenge you to prove that Dhela Ram is not euphonious and yet I do not think there is any one bearing this name. I may, of course, be wrong, and if this essay is read by the happy possessor of that cognomen I must beg his pardon, and request the favour of introduction. Will any one please tell me why of all the musical instruments the Jhanjhan was specially chosen to designate a human being? We have Jhanjhan I als but neither Sarangi Singhs, nor Sitar Prasad. Why should a 'Kela' alone of the fruits stand to signify a man in Kela Ram? When a child is born dark we call him Kallu (Kallus like Ram I als are a multitude) but we never call any one Safedu however white he may be. We have Lahori Rams and Benaresi Dases but no Lucknow Prads. Indeed the art of naming is a complicated one; I do not understand its mysteries, but thank providence that my own delights me both by its meaning and its sound.

There are grotesque names and ridiculous names and names so sweet that they melt in the mouth and make you fall in love even before you are acquainted with the person. A separate essay needs to be written on the beauties and idiosyncracies of the names of our women. Names, it might be said, have a definite existence of their own. We know them as tiny objects of designation at first, then, gradually they acquire meaning and content, swell in import, until their very sound evokes a hundred emotions in the

human soul Can you hear the name of your beloved
without . . . but I do not want to wake up
those tenderly torturing memories It was more
to convince herself of the rightness of her love than
as an expression of faith that Juliet said there was
nothing in a name

"Those whom the gods love die young"

'And even if death catch people, like an open pitfall, and in mid-career, laying out vast projects, and planning monstrous foundations, flushed with hope, and their mouths full of boastful language, they should be at once tripped up and silenced—is there not something brave and spirited in such a termination?'

When the Greeks made their fine saying that those whom the gods love die young, I cannot help believing they had this sort of death also in their eye. For surely, at whatever age it overtake the man, this is to die young."

R. L. STEVENSON *AS TRIPLEX*

When I read Stevenson I cannot help thinking that the Greeks did not have *this* sort of death in mind when they made their fine saying. The world certainly needs its brazen optimists,—men who ride galloping in the face of a storm, and feast at the bases of *Ætna*, unmindful of the hour when their jokes and junkets would be utterly consumed in a crimson squirt of fire. The world needs such men because it is they who lead our blundering humanity to achievement and success. Not to be brow-beaten by either failure or crushing circumstance is to be triumphant in life. Strange as it might seem, a perpetual derisive laughter in the very front and forehead of defeat often converts that hag into a beaming goddess of victory. Even almost as a cheerful fellow sets a-tittering the mournful faces in a room. Bravado and reckless

impetuosity, qualities which Stevenson praises so much, are, in some respects, certainly admirable qualities

But unless you are lucky and success attends your first endeavours, the task of obtaining success in life is both vulgar and vulgarising. To have the assurance that, many reverses notwithstanding, the thing you want to do is so solemnly worth it, that even if you are repeatedly worsted in accomplishing good, you still must keep up the fight, to have the perseverance to stick to your post, to keep firing your guns a whole life-time and even after you have lost all interest in the issues of the battle, certainly argues a deplorable insensitiveness of soul. But even apart from this quixotic posture, how vulgar, how uninterestingly monotonous does the mere process of existence become in the long run? The punctual performance of the physical duties every day and all the days of a lengthy life, the same eating and excreting, the same nightly sleep with a woman, the same tired resuscitation of long-familiar and now magic-less phrases, the repetition of the same unmeaning formulas and civilities with which we eke out a savourless existence, the daily washing of the plaster-cast under which we conceal our secret and retiring souls,—it is surprising that we keep up the show so long without ever getting,—the most of us—really sick with ennui, as we certainly would in any other instance of a similar duration

The life of man describes a curve which goes

mounting upto a particular point, the age of perfect youth, and then comes down in a series of sharp or arrested falls, with, perhaps, a few minor upward inclines. After the one glorious summer of existence, there are, often, occasional St. Martin's summers also. But in the main, and inevitably, we reach to a perfection of body and mind, only to come slithering down the scale. We cannot, alas, maintain the beauty of things at a permanent fixity. Up to a certain stage, we not only grow in *thens* and bulk, but look upon the world with a sense of delighted wonder. The soft and untried graces of the body keep changing with the years into ever-increasing loveliness, the human form unfolds itself like a flower. From the childish lisp and twaddle which are pleasing because of their innocent and incalculable charm, to the boyhood of ten or twelve, the body as well as the mind take in the world, and try to familiarize themselves with the mystery which surrounds them. There is more growth than rounded formation at this period, we just shoot up. At about twenty-years' age, nature has filled in the sap and lovingly moulded the form, when behold!—her masterpiece Man, stands four-square to the world. "A-tiptoe on the highest point of being," flushed with courage and spirit unconquerable, his brow unsmirched by sin whose knowledge and performance life itself necessitates, his mind full of 'justice' and 'harmony', music in his soul, and in his body an athletic comeliness, he stands the living incarnation of beauty,—Michael Angelo's

David, an Apollo Belvedere He has not yet known the melancholy train of evil which the years bring in their wake, he has not yet lifted the embroidered drapery from the face of things and discovered the rotting carrion it often conceals He does not know the bitterest humiliation of life which comes early enough,—the wooing of a woman who does not care for your addresses The canker of Time has not yet begun its task of slow decay, that unending transformation of the delicately perfected body into a hideous and sardonic caricature of its former self. Meanness and greed and hypocrisy have not touched him, nor does he know the futility of an impotent rebellion against an iniquitous scheme which has been ruthlessly imposed upon us His heart is alive to all sensations, his discriminating power is unimpaired, his soul has a keen receptivity He is still a long way from that last degradation, when in spite of old age and unendurable miseries we become stupidly fond of this life, when monotony loses its deadening effect, and failure its disenchanting gall To be taken away from the world at this stage is a meritorious destiny, for since we cannot escape the travail and teen of existence, the only possible mercy seems to be, that the gods call away to their Heaven, the mortals they wish to spare Those whom the gods love die young, brimful of health and beauty, perfect in body and in mind, a Hebe, to carry about the scented chalice in Elysium, a Ganymede to pour out the scented wine.

SELECTED ESSAYS

[On Lotteries]

It is natural for the imaginations of men who lead their lives in too solitary a manner to prey upon themselves, and form from their own conceptions beings and things which have no place in nature. This often makes an adept as much at a loss when he comes into the world as a mere savage. To avoid, therefore, that ineptitude for society, which is frequently the fault of us scholars, and has to men of understanding and breeding something much more shocking and untractable than rusticity itself, I take care to visit all public solemnities, and go into assemblies as often as my studies will permit. This being therefore the first day of the drawing of the lottery, I did not neglect spending a considerable time in the crowd: but as much a philosopher as I pretend to be, I could not but look with a sort of veneration upon the two boys which received the tickets from the wheels, as the impartial but equal dispensers of the fortunes which were to be distributed among the crowd, who all stood expecting the same chance. It seems at first thought very wonderful, that one passion should so universally have the pre-eminence of another in the possession of men's minds as that in this case; all in general have a secret hope of the great ticket: and yet fear in another instance, as in going into a battle, shall have so little influence, as that

though each man believes there will be many thousands slain, each is confident he himself shall escape. This certainty proceeds from our vanity, for every man sees abundance in himself that deserves reward, and nothing which should meet with mortification. But of all the adventurers that filled the hall, there was one who stood by me, who I could not but fancy expected the thousand pounds per annum, as a mere justice to his parts and industry. He had his pencil and table-book, and was at the drawing of each lot, counting how much a man with seven tickets was now nearer the great prize, by the striking out another and another competitor. This man was of the most particular constitution I had ever observed, his passions were so active, that he worked in the utmost stretch of hope and fear. When one rival fell before him, you might see a short gleam of triumph in his countenance, which immediately vanished at the approach of another. What added to the particularity of this man, was, that he every moment cast a look, either upon the commissioners, the wheels, or the boys. I gently whispered him, and asked, when he thought the thousand pounds would come up? "Pugh!" says he, "who knows that?" and then looks upon a little list of his own tickets, which were pretty high in their numbers, and said it would not come this ten days. This fellow will have a good chance, though not that which he has put his heart on. The man is mechanically turned, and made for getting. The simplicity and eagerness which he is in, argues an attention

to his point, though what he is labouring at does not in the least contribute to it. Were it not for such honest fellows as these, the men who govern the rest of their species would have no tools to work with: for the outward show of the world is carried on by such as cannot find out that they are doing nothing. I left my man with great reluctance, seeing the care he took to observe the whole conduct of the persons concerned, and compute the inequality of the chances with his own hands and eyes. "Dear Sir," said I, "they must rise early that cheat you." "Ay", said he, "there's nothing like a man's minding his business himself." "'Tis very true," said I; "the master's eye makes the horse fat."¹

As it is much the greater number who are to go without prizes, it is but very expedient to turn our lecture² to the forming just sentiments on the subject of fortune. One said this morning, that the chief lot he was confident would fall upon some puppy, but this gentleman is one of those wrong tempers who approve only the unhappy, and have a natural prejudice to the fortunate. But as it is certain that there is a great meanness in being attached to a man purely for his fortune, there is no less a meanness in disliking him for his happiness. It is the same perverseness under different colours, but both these

¹ The reference is to the personal supervision of one's task. If the master watches his horse personally, etc.

² *i.e.*, discourse

resentments arise from mere pride

The true greatness of mind consists in valuing men apart from their circumstances, or according to their behaviour in them. Wealth is a distinction only in traffic^d, but it must not be allowed as a recommendation in any other particular, but only just as it is applied. It was very prettily said, that we may learn the little value of fortune by the persons on whom Heaven is pleased to bestow it. However, there is not a harder part in human life than becoming^d wealth and greatness. He must be very well stocked with merit, who is not willing to draw some superiority over his friends from his fortune for it is not every man that can entertain with the air of a guest, and do good offices with the mien of one that receives them.

I must confess, I cannot conceive how a man can place himself in a figure wherein he can so much enjoy his own soul, and that greatest of pleasures,—the just approbation of his own actions, than as an adventurer on this occasion,^e—to sit and see the lots go off without hope or fear, perfectly unconcerned as to himself, but taking part in the good fortune of others.

I will believe there are happy tempers in being, to whom all the good that arrives to any of their

^d i e, Trade, business dealings

^e i e, than that which is proper to

^f i e, the occasion of a lottery

fellow-creatures gives a pleasure These live in a course of substantial and lasting happiness, and have the satisfaction to see all men endeavour to gratify them This state of mind not only lets a man into certain enjoyments, but relieves him from as certain anxieties If you will not rejoice with happy men, you must repine at them Dick Reptile⁶ alluded to this when he said, he would hate no man out of pure idleness

—Steele *The Tatler*,

No 203, July 25-27, 1710.

⁶ *Re*, an imaginary character

[The History of the Mob]

. heu plebes scelerata '

SIL ITAL

. O ye wicked rascallions '

It may seem strange that none of our political writers, in their learned treatises on the English Constitution, should take notice of any more than three Estates, namely, King, Lords and Commons, all entirely passing by in silence that very large and powerful body which form the fourth Estate in this community, and have been long dignified and distinguished by the name of THE MOB

And this will seem still the more strange, when we consider that many of the great writers above mentioned have most incontestably belonged to this very body

To say precisely at what time this fourth Estate began first to figure in the commonwealth, or when the footsteps of that power which it enjoys at this day were first laid, must appear to be a matter of the highest difficulty, perhaps utterly impossible, from the deplorable silence which I have just mentioned. Certain however it is, that at the time of the Norman Conquest, and long afterwards, the condition of this Estate was very low and mean, those who composed

it being in general called Villains¹, a word which did not then bear any very honourable idea, tho' not so bad a one perhaps as it hath since acquired.

The part which this fourth Estate seem anciently to have claimed, was to watch over and control the other three. This indeed they have seldom asserted in plain words, which is possibly the principal reason why our historians have never explicitly assigned them their share of power in the constitution, tho' this Estate have so often exercised it, and so clearly asserted their right to it by force of arms, to wit, by fists, staves, knives, clubs, scythes, and other such offensive weapons.

The first instance which I remember of this was in the reign of Richard I, when they espoused the cause of religion; of which they have been always stout defenders, and destroyed a great number of Jews².

In the same reign we have another example in William Fitz-Osborne, alias Longbeard³, a stout asserter of the rights of the fourth Estate. These rights he defended in the city of London, at the head of a large party, and by force of the arms above

¹ i. e., peasant freemen. Notice the satire.

² At the beginning of the reign of Richard I, there were riots wherever Jews resided, and the mob burned a number of their houses.

³ He organized a resistance to the poll-tax of 1196, but was captured and put to death as a traitor in the same year.

mentioned; but was overpowered, and lost his life by means of a wooden machine called the gallows, which hath been very fatal to the chief champions of this Estate; as it was in the reign of Henry III to one Constantine⁴, who having at the head of a London mob pulled down the house of the High-Steward of Westminster, and committed some other disorders of the like kind, maintained to the Chief Justiciary's face, 'that he had done nothing punishable by law, i.e., *contrary to the rights of the fourth Estate*. He shared however the same fate with Mr Fitz-Osborne

We find in this reign of Henry III, the power of the fourth Estate grown to a very great height indeed, for whilst a treaty was on foot between the King and his Barons, the Mob of London thought proper not only to insult the Queen with all manner of foul language, but likewise to throw stones and dirt at her. Of which assertion of their privilege we hear of no other consequence than that the King was highly displeased, and indeed it seems to be allowed by most writers, that the Mob in this instance went a little too far

In the time of Edward II there is another fact upon record, of a more bloody kind, tho' perhaps not more indecent for the Bishop of Exeter⁵ being

⁴ He was the leader of an attack on Westminster Abbey in 1222, but was captured and hung without a trial. This paragraph exemplifies the mock-serious style of Fielding

⁵ The Bishop Stapledon of Exeter was killed in 1326 by the

a little too busy in endeavouring to preserve the city of London for the King his master, the Mob were pleased to cut his head off

I omit many lesser instances to come to that glorious assertion of the privileges of the Mob under the great and mighty Wat Tyler, when they not only laid then claim to a share in the government, but in truth to exclude all the other Estates, for this purpose, one John Staw or Straw, or Ball, a great orator, who was let out of Maidenstone-Gaol by the Mob, in his harangues told them, that as all men were sons of Adam, there ought to be no distinction, and that it was their duty to reduce all men to perfect equality. This they immediately set about, and to do it in the most effectual manner, they cut off the heads of all the nobility, gentry, clergy etc., who fell into their hands⁶

With these designs they encamped in a large body at Blackheath, whence they sent a message to King Richard II *to come and talk with them, in order to settle the Government*, and when this was not complied with, they marched to London, and the gates being opened by their friends, entered the city, burnt and plundered the Duke of Lancaster's palace, that of the Archbishop and many other great Houses,

mob, at the time when Edward II's wife returned to London to wage war on her husband

⁶ A delightful example of Fielding's ironical way of writing. Wat Tyler and John Ball were the leaders of the famous Peasants' Revolt in 1381

and put to death all of the other three Estates with whom they met, among whom was the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Lord Treasurer

The unhappy end of this noble enterprise is so well known, that it need not be mentioned. The leader being taken off by the gallantry of the Lord Mayor, the whole army, like a body when the head is severed, fell instantly to the ground, whence many were afterwards lifted to that fatal machine which is above taken notice of

I shall pass by the exploits of Cade and Ket⁷ and others. I think I have clearly demonstrated, that there is such a fourth Estate as the Mob, actually existing in our Constitution, which, tho', perhaps for very politic reasons, they keep themselves like the army of Mr Bayes, in disguise⁸, have often issued from their lurking places, and very stoutly maintained their power and their privileges in this community.

Nor hath this Estate, or their claims been unknown to the other three, on the contrary, we find in our statute books numberless attempts to prevent their growing power, and to restrain them at least within some bounds, witness the many laws made against Ribauds, Roberdsmen, Drawlatches, Wasters,

⁷ Jack Cade headed the men of Kent in a rebellion against the King in 1450. Ket's rebellion came off in 1548-49. The leader Ket was a blacksmith of Norfolk.

⁸ Mr Bayes is a character in *The Rehearsal* by Buckingham. In the plays which Mr Bayes writes, the army makes a sudden and unexpected appearance on the scene.

Rogues, Vagrants, Vagabonds⁹; by all which, and many other names, this fourth Estate hath been from time to time dignified and distinguished

Under all these appellations they are frequently named in our Law Books, but I do not perfectly remember to have seen them mentioned under the term of fourth Estate in all my reading, nor do I recollect that any legislative or Judicial power is expressly allowed to belong to them. And yet certain it is, that they have from time immemorial been used to exercise a judicial capacity in certain instances wherein the ordinary courts have been deficient for want of evidence, this being no let or hindrance to the administration of justice before the gentlemen who compose this fourth Estate, who often proceed to judgment without any evidence at all. Nor must I omit the laudable expedition which is used on such occasions, their proceedings being entirely free from those delays which are so much complained of in other courts. I have indeed known a pickpocket arrested, tried, convicted, and ducked almost to death in less time than would have been consumed in reading his indictment at the Old Bailey¹⁰. These delays they

⁹ *Ribauds*,—ribalds, or men of very low estate, *roberdsmen*,—robbers, *waster*,—thief, *drawlatch*,—a sneak-thief, a rascal etc. As Fielding is writing a historical account, he uses the old, and now obsolete, names by which these "gentlemen of the fourth Estate" were designated. Mark the irony. These old names are high-sounding enough.

¹⁰ The Central Criminal Court of London. Fielding is describing the rough handling of alleged criminals by the Mob.

avoid chiefly by hearing only one side of the question, concluding, as Judge Gripus¹¹ did of old, that the contrary method serves only to introduce uncertainty and confusion

I do not, however, pretend to affirm anything of the legal original of this jurisdiction. I know the learned are greatly divided in their opinions concerning this matter, or rather perhaps in their inclinations, some being unwilling to allow any power at all to this Estate, and others as stoutly contending that it would be for the public good to deliver the sword of justice entirely into their hands

So prevalent hath this latter opinion grown to be of modern days that the fourth Estate hath been permitted to encroach in a most prodigious manner. What these encroachments have been, and the particular causes which have contributed to them, shall be the subject of my next Saturday's paper¹²

—Fielding *The Covent-Garden Journal*, No. 47.

¹¹ Here used as a fictitious name

¹² In Fielding's days,—the earlier half of the eighteenth century, people were no great respecters of the law, indeed, they were often very high-handed and unrestrained. Fielding gives many examples of their encroachments in the next paper of his journal

'On the Increased Love of Life with Age]

Are, that is to say, the enjoyment of life, increases our desire of it, and thus? Those dangers which, in the vigour of youth we had learned to despise, assume a more terrible aspect as we grow old. Our caution increasing with our experience, fear becomes at last the prevailing passion of the mind, and the small remainder of life is taken up in making efforts to keep off our end, or provide for a continued existence.

So much contradiction in our nature, and to which even life was not liable! If I should judge of that part of life which lies before me by that which I have already seen, the prospect is hideous. Experience tells me, that my past enjoyment have brought no real relief, and sensation assure me, that those I have felt are stronger than those which are yet to come. Yet experience and sensation in vain persuade, hope, more powerful than either, dresses out the distant prospect in imagined beauty, some happiness, in long perspective, still beckons me to pursue, and, like a living garter, every new disappointment increases my ardour to continue the game.

Whence then is this increased love of life, which grows upon us with our years, whence comes it, that we thus make greater efforts to preserve our existence, at a period when it becomes scarce worth the keeping? Is it that Nature, attentive to the preservation of mankind, increases our wishes to live, while she lessens

our enjoyments, and, as 'he robs the senses of every pleasure, equips imagination in the 'poils?' Life would be insupportable to an old man, who, loaded with infirmities, feared death no more than when in the vigour of manhood, the numberless calamities of decaying nature, and the consciousness of surviving every pleasure, would at once induce him, with his own hand, to terminate the scene of misery, but happily the contempt of death forestalls him at a time when it could only be prejudicial; and life acquires an imaginary value, in proportion as its real value is no more.

Our attachment to every object around us increases, in general, from the length of our acquaintance with it. 'I would not choose', says a French philosopher, 'to see an old post pulled up with which I had been long acquainted.' A mind long habituated to a certain set of objects, insensibly becomes fond of seeing them; visits them from habit, and parts from them with reluctance. From hence proceeds the variance of the old in every kind of possession, they love the world and all that it produces, they love life and all its advantages, not because it gives them pleasure, but because they have known it long.

Chinving the Chaste, ascending the throne of China, commanded that all who were unjustly detained in prison, during the preceding reigns, should be set free. Among the number who came to thank their deliverer on this occasion, there appeared a majestic old man, who, falling at the emperor's feet,

but little regarded To us, who are declined in years, life appears like an old friend, its jests have been anticipated in former conversation, it has no new story to make us smile, no new improvement with which to surprise, yet still we love it, destitute of every enjoyment, still we love it, husband the wasting treasure with increasing frugality, and feel all the poignancy of anguish in the fatal separation

Sir Philip Mordaunt was young, beautiful, sincere, brave, an Englishman He had a complete fortune of his own, and the love of the king his master, which was equivalent to riches Life opened all her treasures before him, and promised a long succession of happiness He came, tasted of the entertainment, but was disgusted even at the beginning He professed an aversion to living, was tired of walking round the same circle, had tried every enjoyment, and found them all grow weaker at every repetition 'If life be, in youth, so displeasing', cried he to himself, 'what will it appear when age comes on? if it be at present indifferent, sure it will then be execrable' This thought embittered every reflection; till, at last, with all the serenity of perverted reason, he ended the debate with a pistol! Had this self-deluded man been apprised, that existence grows more desirable to us the longer we exist, he would have then faced old age without shrinking, he would have boldly dared to live, and served that society by his future assiduity, which he basely injured by his desertion

—Goldsmith *Essays*

[Ourselves Alone]

In these troublous times men everywhere are learning, often in bitterness and despondency, that even a nation can not live to itself alone. They see world-wide economic and financial crisis, international conferences one after the other convened, adjourned, and reassembled; harassed statesmen flocking together, parting, and arranging to meet again. It has become a commonplace on the lips of the experts that the world's trouble can only be cured by a world effort, that it is useless to apply anything short of an international shoulder to the mire-bound wheel. It begins to be clear to the most ordinary of intelligences that uncompromising concentration even on a national self can only result, as for the individual, in damage or ruin to the very self which it was meant to cherish. It is the modern phase of a lesson which the long centuries have sought to teach by precept and experience. Man's progress in it has been slow. The primeval brute had no idea of altruism and no room for it in the fierceness of his struggle for existence. The ascent of man can be represented as a gradual emergence from that state of far from splendid isolation. Family life meant some externalizing of the self even for the "old man" of the group. The tribe widened the field of regard for the will and the well-being of others. The citizen

of the full-fledged state made a further great advance along the line of cooperation with his fellows at the cost of restraint and discipline of his own "inborn, uninstructed impulses" There, until comparatively lately, the process halted The nations, each compassing its great mass of mutually helpful and considerate units, remained strangers, and often enemies, to one another, playing each for its own hand, or at the most acting temporarily with a chosen confederate under the bond of the interest of the moment That stage seems about to pass, under the compelling force of circumstance, into an era of wider and more continuous cooperation and of mutual thoughtfulness

If, for relief from his outward woes, man turns his eyes inward upon himself, he is still haunted by the problem of isolation and how to deal with it. He is conscious of a self, sharply divided from all that is not itself, and yet bound to project itself beyond its own boundaries and to take a vital interest in what lies outside The more thoroughly he obeys that dictate, the less amenable to logic the problem becomes for him The wider his interests, the deeper his sympathies, the keener his feeling for the changes and chances that befall his fellow-men, the more pronounced and the more individual becomes the personality which expresses itself in such proliferation The man who gives play to generous instincts and develops far-reaching contacts is more than ever himself and more definitely no one and nothing else

The soul which he spends so freely is continually saved to him in the process. It is the world's greatest and most hopeful paradox. But that is not quite the end of the story for the individual. Each man is, in a sense, the captive of his individuality. No effort can enable him to escape from its encirclement or to make his way within the ring-fence of another soul. Love and duty can weave strong and precious ties, but in the last resort they are external to the core of personality. In profound distress, in overwhelming sorrow, and most clearly of all in the final passing from the mortal scene, there emerges an ultimate loneliness which the utmost intensity of human love and yearning cannot wholly penetrate. And if, to companionable man, that thought has sadness in it, he is at least bound to recognize that in no other way can he pay the price for the great possession of personality.

—*The Times* May 6, 1932.

[The Pleasures of the Imagination]

*Avia Pieridum perago loca, nullius ante
Trita solo, juvat integros accedere fontis,
Atque haurire* *Lucr*¹

Our sight is the most perfect and most delightful of all our senses. It fills the mind with the largest variety of ideas, converses with its objects at the greatest distance, and continues the longest in action without being tired or satiated with its proper enjoyments. The sense of feeling can indeed give us a notion of extension, shape, and all other ideas that enter at the eye, except colours, but at the same time it is very much straightened and confined in its operations to the number, bulk, and distance of its particular objects. Our sight seems designed to supply all those defects, and may be considered as a more delicate and diffusive kind of touch that spreads its self over an infinite multitude of bodies, comprehends the largest figures, and brings into reach some of the most remote parts of the universe.

It is this sense which furnishes the imagination with its ideas, so that by the Pleasures of the Imagination or Fancy (which I shall use promiscuously) I

¹ *i.e.*, I traverse pathless tracts of the Pierides never yet trodden by any foot. I love to approach virgin springs and there to drink. *Lucretius De Rerum Natura*, 1, 926-8

here mean such as arise from visible objects, either when we have them actually in our view, or when we call up their ideas into our minds by paintings, statues, descriptions, or any the like occasion. We cannot indeed have a single image in the fancy that did not make its first entrance through the sight; but we have the power of retaining, altering, and compounding those images which we have once received into all the varieties of picture and vision that are most agreeable to the imagination. For by this faculty a man in a dungeon is capable of entertaining himself with scenes and landscapes more beautiful than any that can be found in the whole compass of nature.

There are few words in the English language which are employed in a more loose and uncircumscribed sense than those of the *Fancy* and the *Imagination*. I therefore thought it necessary to fix and determine the notion of these two words, as I intend to make use of them in the thread of my following speculations, that the reader may conceive rightly what is the subject which I proceed upon. I must therefore desire him to remember that by the Pleasures of the Imagination I mean only such pleasures as arise originally from sight and that I divide these pleasures into two kinds, my design being first of all to discourse of those primary Pleasures of the Imagination which entirely proceed from such objects as are before our eyes, and in the next place to speak of those secondary Pleasures of the Imagination which

flow from the ideas of visible objects, when the objects are not actually before the eye, but are called up into our memories, or formed into agreeable visions of things that are either absent or fictitious.

The Pleasures of the Imagination, taken in the full extent, are not so gross as those of sense, nor so refined as those of the understanding. The last are, indeed, more preferable, because they are founded on some new knowledge or improvement in the mind of man, yet it must be confessed that those of the imagination are as great and as transporting as the other. A beautiful prospect delights the soul as much as a demonstration, and a description in *Homer* has charmed more readers than a chapter in *Aristotle*. Besides, the Pleasures of the Imagination have this advantage above those of the understanding, that they are more obvious and more easy to be acquired. It is but opening the eye and the scene enters. The colours paint themselves on the fancy with very little attention of thought or application of mind in the beholder. We are struck, we know not how, with the symmetry of any thing we see, and immediately assent to the beauty of an object without enquiring into the particular causes and occasions of it.

A man of a polite imagination is let into a great many pleasures that the vulgar are not capable of receiving. He can converse with a picture and find an agreeable companion in a statue. He meets with a secret refreshment in a description, and often feels a greater satisfaction in the prospect of fields and

meadows than another does in the possession. It gives him, indeed, a kind of property in every thing he sees, and makes the most rude uncultivated parts of nature administer to his pleasures, so that he looks upon the world, as it were, in another light, and discovers in it a multitude of charms that conceal themselves from the generality of mankind.

There are, indeed, but very few who know how to be idle and innocent, or have a relish of any pleasures that are not criminal, every diversion they take is at the expense of some one virtue or another, and their very first step out of business is into vice or folly. A man should endeavour, therefore, to make the sphere of his innocent pleasures as wide as possible, that he may retire into them with safety and find them such a satisfaction as a wise man would not blush to take. Of this nature are those of the imagination, which do not require such a bent of thought as is necessary to our more serious employments nor, at the same time, suffer the mind to sink into that negligence and remissness which are apt to accompany our more sensual delights, but, like a gentle exercise to the faculties, awaken them from sloth and idleness without putting them upon any labour or difficulty.

We might here add that the pleasures of the fancy are more conducive to health than those of the understanding, which are worked out by dint of thinking, and attended with too evident a labour of the brain. Delightful scenes, whether in nature,

painting, or poetry, have a kindly influence on the body as well as the mind, and not only serve to clear and brighten the imagination but are able to disperse grief and melancholy, and to set the animal spirits in pleasing and agreeable motions. For this reason Sir Francis Bacon, in his essay upon *Health*, has not thought it improper to prescribe to his reader a poem or a prospect, where he particularly dissuades him from knotty and subtle disquisitions and advises him to pursue studies that fill the mind with splendid and illustrious objects, as histories, fables, and contemplations of nature

—Addison. *The Spectator*,

No 411, June 21. 1712

[Genius]

Genius is akin both to madness and inspiration and, as every one is both more or less inspired and more or less mad, every one has more or less genius. When, therefore, we speak of genius we do not mean an absolute thing which some men have and others have not, but a small scale-turning overweight of a something which we all have but which we can not either define or apprehend—the quantum which we all have being allowed to go without saying.

This small excess weight has been defined as a 'supreme capacity for taking trouble,' but he who thus defined it can hardly claim genius in respect of his own definition—his capacity for taking trouble does not seem to have been abnormal. It might be more fitly described as a supreme capacity for getting its possessors into trouble of all kinds and keeping them therein so long as the genius remains. People who are credited with genius have, indeed, been sometimes very punstaking, but they would often show more signs of genius if they had taken less. "You have taken too much trouble with your opera", said Handel to Gluck. It is not likely that the "Hailstone Chorus" or Mrs Quickly cost their creators much pains, indeed, we commonly feel the ease with which a

¹ Carlyle's definition

difficult feat has been performed to be a more distinctive mark of genius than the fact that the performer took greater pains before he could achieve it. Pains can serve genius, or even mar it, but they cannot make it

We can rarely, however, say what pains have or have not been taken in any particular case, for, over and above the spent pains of a man's early efforts, the force of which may carry him far beyond all trace of themselves, there are the still more remote and ancestral pains, repeated we know not how often or in what fortunate correlation with pains taken in some other and unseen direction. This points to the conclusion that, though it is wrong to suppose the essence of genius to lie in a capacity for taking pains, it is right to hold that it must have been rooted in pains and that it cannot have grown without them

Genius, again, might, perhaps almost as well, be defined as a supreme capacity for saving other people from having to take pains, if the highest flights of genius did not seem to know nothing about pains one way or the other. What trouble can *Hamlet* or the *Iliad* save to anyone? Genius can, and does, save it sometimes, the genius of Newton may have saved a good deal of trouble one way or another, but it has probably engendered as much new as it has saved old

This, however, is all a matter of chance, for genius never seems to care whether it makes the burden or bears it. The only certain thing is that

there will be a burden, for the Holy Ghost has ever tended towards a breach of the peace, and the New Jerusalem, when it comes will probably be found so far to resemble the old as to stone its prophets freely.² The world this world is a jealous world, and thou shalt have none other worlds but it. Genius points to change, and change is a hankering after another world so the old world suspects it. Genius disturbs order, it unsettles *mores* and hence it is immoral. On a small scale it is intolerable, but genius will have no small scales: it is even more immoral for a man to be too far in front than to lag too far behind. The only absolute morality is absolute stagnation, but this is unpractical so a peck of change is permitted to every one, but it must be a peck only, whereas genius would have ever so many sacks full. There is a myth among some Eastern nation that at the birth of Genius an unkind fairy marred all the good gifts of the other fairies by depriving it of the power of knowing where to stop.

Nor does genius care more about money than about trouble. It is no respecter of time, trouble, money or persons, the four things round which human affairs turn most persistently. It is like Love, "too

¹ i.e., Genius always tends to produce conflict, and even in the perfect city (which according to the Bible will be built when this world is destroyed) it will continue to create disturbance. The Holy Ghost symbolizes inspiration.

² i.e., Manners

young to know the worth of gold "It knows, indeed both love and hate, but not as we know them, for it will fly for help to its bitterest foe, or attack its dearest friend in the interests of the art it serves

Yet this genius, which so despises the world, is the only thing of which the world is permanently enamoured, and the more it flouts the world, the more the world worships it, when it has once well killed it in the flesh. Who can understand this eternal crossing in love and contradiction in terms, which warps the woof of actions and things from the atom to the universe? The more a man despises time, trouble, money, persons, place and everything on which the world insists as most essential to salvation, the more pious will this same world hold him to have been. What a fund of universal unconscious scepticism must underlie the world's opinions! For we are all alike in our worship of genius that has passed through the fire. Nor can this universal instinctive consent be explained otherwise than as the welling up of a spring whose sources lie deep in the conviction that great as this world is, it masks a greater wherein its wisdom is folly and which we know as blind men know where the sun is shining, certainly, but not distinctly.

This should in itself be enough to prove that such a world exists, but there is still another proof in

**Narcissus*, "Should Riches mate with Love"—[Burler's note]

the fact that so many come among us showing instinctive and ineradicable familiarity with a state of things which has no counterpart here, and can not, therefore, have been acquired here. From such a world we come, every one of us, but some seem to have a more living recollection of it than others. Perfect recollection of it no man can have, for to put on flesh is to have all one's other memories jarred beyond power of conscious recognition. And genius must put on flesh, for it is only by the hook and crook of taint and flesh that tainted beings like ourselves can apprehend it, only in and through flesh can it be made manifest to us at all. The flesh and the shop will return no matter with how many pitchforks we expel them, for we cannot conceivably expel them thoroughly, therefore it is better not to be too hard upon them. And yet this same flesh cloaks genius at the very time that it reveals it. It seems as though the flesh must have been on, and must have gone clean off before genius can be discerned, and also that we must stand a long way from it, for the world grows more and more myopic as it grows older. And this brings another trouble, for by the time the flesh has gone off it enough, and it is far enough away for us to see it without glasses, the chances are we shall have forgotten its very existence and lose the wish to see at the very moment of becoming able to do so. Hence there appears to be no remedy for the oft-repeated complaint that the world knows nothing of its greatest men. How can it be expected to do so?

And how can its greatest men be expected to know more than a very little of the world? At any rate, they seldom do so, and it is just because they cannot and do not that, if they ever happen to be found out at all, they are recognized as the greatest and the world weeps and wrings its hands that it cannot know more about them

Lastly, if genius cannot be bought with money, still less can it sell what it produces. The only price that can be paid for genius is suffering, and this is the only wages it can receive. The only work that has any considerable permanence is written, more or less consciously, in the blood of the writer, or in that of his or her forefathers. Genius is like money, or, again, like crime, every one has a little, if it be only a half-penny, and he can beg or steal this much if he has not got it, but those who have little are rarely very fond of millionaires. People generally like and understand best those who are of much about the same social standing and money status as their own, and so it is for the most part as between those who have only the average amount of genius and the Homers, Shakespeares and Handels of the race.

And yet so paradoxical is everything connected with genius, that it almost seems as though the nearer people stood to one another in respect either of money or genius, the more jealous they become of one another. I have read somewhere that Thackeray was one day flattening his nose against a grocer's window and saw two bags of sugar, one marked ten pence

half-penny and the other eleven pence (for sugar has come down since Thackeray's time) As he left the window he was heard to say, "How they must hate one another!" So it is in the animal and vegetable worlds The war of extermination is generally fiercest between the most nearly allied species, for these stand most in one another's sight So here again the same old paradox and contradiction in terms meets us, like a stone wall, in the fact that we love best those who are in the main like ourselves, but if they become unlike enough, we may often be very fond of them.

Genius must make those that have it think apart, and to think apart is to take one's view of things instead of being, like Poins,⁴ a blessed fellow to think as every man thinks A man who thinks for himself knows what others do not, but does not know what others know. Hence the *belli causa*,⁵ for he cannot serve two masters, the God of his own inward light and the Mammon of common sense, at one and the same time. How can a man think apart and not apart? But if he is a genius this is the riddle he must solve The uncommon sense of genius and the common sense of the rest of the world are thus as husband and wife to one another, they are always quarrelling, and common sense, who must be taken to be the husband, always fancies himself the master—nevertheless genius

⁴ A character in Shakespeare's *Henry IV*, and a friend of Falstaff

⁵ The cause of war, the cause for division

there would be but small improvements in the world, were there not some common principle of action working equally with all men. And such a principle is ambition or a desire of fame by which great endowments are not suffered to lie idle and useless to the public, and many vicious men over-reached as it were, and engaged contrary to their natural inclinations in a glorious and laudable course of action. For we may further observe, that men of the greatest abilities are most fired with ambition, and that, on the contrary, mean and narrow minds are the least actuated by it;—whether it be that a man's sense of his own incapacities makes him despair of coming at fame, or that he has not enough range of thought to look out for any good which does not more immediately relate to his interest or convenience, or that Providence in the very frame of his soul would not subject him to such a passion as would be useless to the world, and a torment to himself.

Were not this desire of fame very strong, the difficulty of obtaining it, and the danger of losing it when obtained, would be sufficient to deter a man from so vain a pursuit.

How few are there who are furnished with abilities sufficient to recommend their actions to the admiration of the world, and to distinguish themselves from the rest of mankind? Providence for the most part sets us upon a level, and observes a kind of proportion in its dimensions towards us. If it renders us perfect in one accomplishment it generally leaves us

defective in another, and seems careful rather of preserving every person from being mean and deficient in his qualifications than of making any single one eminent and extraordinary.

And among those who are the most richly endowed by nature and accomplished by their own industry, how few are there whose virtues are not obscured by the ignorance, prejudice or envy of their beholders? Some men cannot discern between a noble and a mean action. Others are apt to attribute them to some false end or intention, and others purposely misrepresent or put a wrong interpretation on them.

But the more to enforce this consideration, we may observe that those are generally most unsuccessful in their pursuit after fame who are most desirous of obtaining it. It is *Sallust's* remark upon *Cato* that the less he coveted glory the more he acquired it.

Men take an ill-natured pleasure in crossing our inclinations and disappointing us in what our hearts are most set upon. When, therefore, they have discovered the passionate desire of fame in the ambitious man (as no temper of mind is more apt to shew itself) they become sparing and reserved in their commendations; they envy him the satisfaction of an applause, and look on their praises rather as a kindness done to his person than as a tribute paid to his merit. Others who are free from this natural perverseness of temper grow wary in their praises of one who sets too great value on them, lest they should raise

him too high in his own imagination, and by consequence remove him to a greater distance from themselves

But further, this desire of fame naturally betrays the ambitious man into such indecencies as are a lessening to his reputation. He is still afraid lest any of his actions should be thrown away in private, lest his deserts should be concealed from the notice of the world, or receive any disadvantage from the reports which others make of them. This often sets him on empty boasts and ostentations of himself, and betrays him into vain fantastic recitals of his own performances. His discourse generally learns one way, and whatever is the subject of it, tends obliquely either to the detracting from others or the extolling of himself. Vanity is the natural weakness of an ambitious man which exposes him to the secret scorn and derision of those he converses with and ruins the character he is so industrious to advance by it. For tho' his actions are never so glorious, they lose their lustre when they are drawn at large and set to show by his own hand; and as the world is more apt to find fault than to commend, the boast will probably be censured when the great action that occasioned it is forgotten.

Besides, this very desire of fame is looked on as a meanness and imperfection in the greatest character. A solid and substantial greatness of soul looks down with a generous neglect on the censures and applauses of the multitude, and places a man beyond the little noise and strife of tongues. Accordingly we find in

ourselves a secret awe and veneration for the character of one who moves above us in a regular and illustrious course of virtue without any regard to our good or ill opinions of him, to our reproaches or commendations. As on the contrary it is usual for us, when we would take off from the fame and reputation of an action, to ascribe it to vain-glory and a desire of fame in the actor. Nor is this common judgment and opinion of mankind ill-founded, for certainly it denotes no great bravery of mind to be worked up to any noble action by so selfish a motive, and to do that out of a desire of fame which we could not be prompted to by a disinterested love of mankind, or by a generous passion for the glory of him that made us

Thus is fame a thing difficult to be obtained by all, but particularly by those who thirst after it, since most men have so much either of ill-nature or of wariness, as not to gratify and soothe the vanity of the ambitious man, and since this very thirst after fame naturally betrays him into such indelicacies as are a lessening to his reputation, and is itself looked upon as a weakness in the greatest characters

In the next place, fame is easily lost, and as difficult to be preserved as it was at first to be acquired. But this I will make the subject of a following paper.

—Addison *The Spectator*,
No 255, Dec 22, 1711

[Miracles and Natural Laws]

*'The world was made in order,
And the atoms march in tier'*

The aspects of Nature are more varied and impressive in Alpine regions than elsewhere. The mountains themselves are permanent objects of grandeur. The effects of sunrise and sunset, the formation and distribution of clouds; the discharge of electricity, such as we witnessed a day or two ago, the precipitation of rain, hail and snow, the creeping of glaciers and the rushing of rivers, the colouring of the atmosphere and its grocer action in the case of storms,—all these things tend to excite the feelings and to bewilder the mind. In this entanglement of phenomenon it seems hopeless to seek for law or orderly connection. And before the thought of law dawned upon the human mind men naturally referred these inexplicable effects to personal agency. The savage saw in the fall of a catract the leap of a spirit, and the echoed thunder-peal was to him the hammer-clang of an exasperated god. Propitiation of these terrible powers was the consequence, and sacrifice was offered to the demons of earth and air.

But the effect of time appears to be to chislen the emotions and to modify the creations which depend upon them alone, by giving more and more predominance to the intellectual power of man. One

by one natural phenomena were associated with their proximate causes; this process still continues, and the idea of direct personal volition mixing itself in the economy of nature is retreating more and more. Many of us fear this tendency,¹ our faith and feeling are dear to us, and we look with suspicion and dislike on any philosophy which would deprive us of the relations in which we have been accustomed to believe, as tending directly to dry up the soul. Probably every change from ancient savagery to our present enlightenment excited, in a greater or less degree, a fear of this kind. But the fact is, that we have not at all determined whether the form under which they now appear in the world is necessary to the prosperity of faith and feeling. We may err in linking the imperishable with the transitory, and confound the living plant with the decaying pole to which it clings. My object, however, at present is not to argue, but to mark a tendency. We have ceased to propitiate the powers of Nature,—ceased even to pray for things in *manifest* contradiction to natural laws. In Protestant countries, at least, I think it is conceded that the age of miracles is past.

The general question of miracles is at present in able and accomplished hands, and were it not so, my polemical acquirements are so limited, that I should not presume to enter upon a discussion of this subject.

¹ This was written in 1861 when scientific thought was profoundly affecting the religious convictions of the people.

on its entire merits. But there is one little outlying point, which attaches itself to the question of miracles, and on which a student of science may, without quitting the ground which strictly belongs to him, make a few observations. If I should err here, there are many religious men in this country quite competent to correct me, and did I not feel it to be needless, I should invite them to do so. I shall, as far as possible, shut out in my brief remarks the exercise of mere *opinion*, so that if I am wrong my error may be immediately reduced to demonstration.

At the auberge near the foot of the Rhone Glacier, I met in the summer of 1858, an athletic young priest who, after he had accomplished a solid breakfast and a bottle of wine, informed me that he had come up to 'bless the mountains,' this being the annual custom of the place. Year by year the Highest was entreated to make such meteorological arrangements as should ensure food and shelter for the flocks and herds of the Valaisians. A diversion of the Rhone, or a deepening of the river's bed, would have been of incalculable benefit to the inhabitants of the valley at the time I mention. But the priest would have shrunk from the idea of asking the Omnipotent to open a new channel for the river, or to cause a portion of it to flow up the Mayenward, over the Grimsel Pass, and down the vale of Oberhasli to Brientz. This he would have deemed a *miracle*, and he did not come to ask the Creator to perform miracles, but to do something which he manifestly thought

lay quite within the bounds of the natural and non-miraculous. A Protestant gentleman who was present at the time, smiled at this recital. He had no faith in the priest's blessing, still he deemed the prayer actually offered to be different in kind from a request to open a new river-cut, or to cause the water to flow up-hill.

In a similar manner we all smile at the poor Tyrolese² priest, who, when he feared the buisting of a glacier, offered the sacrifice of the mass upon the ice as a means of averting the calamity. That poor man did not expect to convert the ice into adamant, or to strengthen its texture so as to enable it to withstand the pressure of the water; nor did he expect that his sacrifice would cause the stream to roll back upon its source and relieve him, by a miracle, of its presence. But beyond the boundaries of his knowledge lay a region where rain was generated he knew not how. He was not so presumptuous as to expect a miracle, but he firmly believed that in yonder cloud-land matters could be so arranged, without trespass on the miraculous, that the stream which threatened him and his flock should be caused to shrink within its proper bounds.

Both the priests fashioned that which they did not understand to their respective wants and wishes,

² Tyrol, an Austrain province of almost wholly mountainous country. The names in the above paragraph are those of passes or valleys or lakes in the Alps.

the unintelligible is the domain of the imagination. A similar state of mind has been prevalent among mechanicians, many of whom, and some of them extremely skilful ones, were occupied a century ago with the question of a *perpetual motion*. They aimed at constructing a machine which should execute work without the expenditure of power, and many of them went mad in the pursuit of this object. The faith in such a consummation, involving as it did immense personal interest to the inventor, was extremely exciting, and every attempt to destroy this faith was met by bitter resentment on the part of those who held it. Gradually, however, the pleasant dream dissolved, as men became more and more acquainted with the true functions of machinery. The hope of getting work out of mere mechanical combinations, without expending power, disappeared, but still there remained for the mechanical speculator a cloud-land denser than that which filled the imagination of the Tyrolese priest, and out of which he still hoped to evolve perpetual motion. There was the mystic store of chemic force, which no body understood, there were heat and light, electricity and magnetism, all competent to produce mechanical motions. Here, then, is the mine in which we must seek our gem. A modified and more refined form of the ancient faith revived; and, for aught I know, a remnant of sanguine designers may at the present moment be engaged on the problem which like-minded men in former years left unsolved.

And why should a perpetual motion, even under modern conditions, be impossible? The answer to this question is the statement of that great generalization of modern science, which is known under the name of the *Conservation of Force*. This principle asserts that no power can make its appearance in Nature without an equivalent expenditure of some other form of power, that natural agents are so related to each other as to be mutually convertible, but that no new agency is created. Light runs into heat, heat into electricity, electricity into magnetism, magnetism into mechanical force, and mechanical force again into light and heat. The Proteus³ changes, but he is ever the same, and his changes in Nature, supposing no miracle to supervene, are the expression, not of spontaneity, but of *physical necessity*. One primal essence underlies all natural phenomenon—and that is MOTION. Every aspect of Nature is a quality of motion. The atmosphere is such by its power of atomic motion. The glacier resolves itself to water, the water to transparent vapour, and the vapour to untransparent cloud, by changes of motion. The very hand which moves this pen involves in its mechanical oscillation over this page the destruction of an equivalent amount of motion of another kind. A perpetual motion, then,

³ The name of a sea-god who, if captured, had to prophesy the future, and to escape doing so could change into all kinds of shapes

is deemed impossible, because it demands the creation of force, whereas the principle of Nature is, no creation but infinite conversion.

It is an old remark that the law which moulds a tear also rounds a planet. In the application of law in Nature the terms great and small are unknown. Thus the principle referred to teaches us that the south wind gliding over the crest of the Matterhorn¹ is as firmly ruled as the earth in its orbital revolution round the sun, and that the fall of its vapour into clouds is exactly as much a matter of necessity as the return of the seasons. The dispersion, therefore, of the slightest mist by the special volition of the Eternal, would be as much a miracle as the rolling of the Rhone up the precipices of the Mævenward. It seems to me quite beyond the present power of science to demonstrate that the Tyrolese priest, or his colleague of the Rhone valley, asked for an impossibility in praying for good weather, but science can demonstrate the incompleteness of the knowledge of Nature which limited their prayers to this narrow ground, and she may lessen the number of instances in which we 'ask amiss', by showing that we sometimes pray for the performance of a miracle when we do not intend it. She does assert, for example, that without a disturbance of natural law, quite as serious as the stoppage of an eclipse, or the rolling of the St. Lawrence up the Falls of Niagara, no act of humiliation,

¹ One of the best known mountains in the Alps

[The Struggle for Existence in Human Society¹]

In the strict sense of the word "nature," it denotes the sum of the phenomenal world, of that which has been, and is, and will be, and society, like art, is therefore a part of nature. But it is convenient to distinguish those parts of nature in which man plays the part of immediate cause, as something apart, and therefore, society, like art, is usefully to be considered as distinct from nature. It is the more desirable, and even necessary, to make this distinction, since society differs from nature in having a definite moral object; whence it comes about that the course shaped by the ethical man—the member of society, or citizen—necessarily runs counter to that which the non-ethical man—the primitive savage, or man as a mere member of the animal kingdom—tends to adopt. The latter fights out the struggle for existence to the bitter end, like any other animal, the former devotes his best energies to the object of setting limits to the struggle.

In the cycle of phenomena presented by the life of man, the animal, no more moral end is discernible than in that presented by the lives of the wolf and of the deer. However imperfect the relics of prehistoric

¹ The author's own notes are indicated by an H

men may be, the evidence which they afford clearly tends to the conclusion that, for thousands and thousands of years, before the origins of the oldest known civilizations, men were savages of a very low type. They strove with their enemies and their competitors; they preyed upon things weaker and less cunning than themselves; they were born, multiplied without stint, and died, for thousands of generations, alongside the mammoth, the urus, the lion, and the hyaena, whose lives were spent in the same way, and they were no more to be praised or blamed, on moral grounds, than their less erect and more hairy compatriots.

As among those, so primitive men, the weakest and stupidest went to the wall, while the toughest and shrewdest, those who were best fitted to cope with their circumstances, but not the best in any other sense, survived. Life was a continual free fight, and beyond the limited and temporal relations of the family, the Hobbesian war² of each against all was the normal state of existence. The human species, like others, plashed and foundered amid the general stream of evolution, keeping its head above water as it best might, and thinking neither of whence nor whither.

² In his *Leviathan*, Hobbes, the political philosopher, said that until men formed a contract among themselves and gave their right of mutual aggression in favour of the ruler, there was a chaos in the world. Any one could rob or murder anybody else unstintingly.

The history of civilization—that is, of society—on the other hand, is the record of the attempts which the human race has made to escape from this position. The first men who substituted the state of mutual peace for that of mutual war, whatever the motive which impelled them to take that step, created society. But, in establishing peace, they obviously put a limit upon the struggle for existence. Between the members of that society, at any rate, it was not to be pursued *à outrance*.³ And of all the successive shapes society has taken, that most nearly approaches perfection in which the war of individual against individual is most strictly limited. The primitive savage tortured by Istar,⁴ appropriated whatever took his fancy, and killed whomsoever opposed him, if he could. On the contrary, the ideal of the ethical man is to limit his freedom of action to a sphere in which he does not interfere with the freedom of others, he seeks the common weal as much as his own, and, indeed, as an essential part of his own welfare. Peace is both end and means with him, and he founds his life on a more or less complete self-restraint, which is the negation of the unlimited struggle for existence. He tries to escape from his place in the animal kingdom, founded on the free development of the principle

³ Excessively

⁴ Istar, an old Babylonian deity symbolizing Nature. She combines the attributes of the goddess of love and the god of war.

of non-moral evolution, and to establish a kingdom of Man, governed upon the principle of moral evolution. For society not only has a moral end, but in its perfection, social life, is embodied morality.

But the effort of ethical man to work towards a moral end by no means abolished, perhaps has hardly modified, the deep-seated organic impulses which impel the natural man to follow his non-moral course. One of the most essential conditions, if not the chief cause, of the struggle for existence, is the tendency to multiply without limit which man shares with all living beings. It is notable that "increase and multiply" is a commandment traditionally much older than the ten, and that it is, perhaps, the only one which has been spontaneously and *ex animo*⁵ obeyed by the great majority of the human race. But, in civilized society, the inevitable result of such obedience is the re-establishment, in all its intensity, of that struggle for existence—the war of each against all—the mitigation or abolition of which was the chief end of social organization.

It is conceivable that, at some period in the history of the fabled Atlantis,⁶ the production of food should have been exactly sufficient to meet the wants of the population, that the makers of the commodities of the artificer should have amounted to just the

⁵ *i.e.*, heartily, sincerely

⁶ A legendary island in the Atlantic Ocean, supposed to have been a powerful kingdom thousands of years before the Christian era, now believed to be under water

number supportable by the surplus food of the agriculturists. And, as there is no harm in adding another monstrous supposition to the foregoing, let it be imagined that every man, woman and child was perfectly virtuous, and aimed at the good of all as the highest personal good. In that happy land, the natural man would have been finally put down by the ethical man. There would have been no competition, but the industry of each would have been serviceable to all, no body being vain and no body avaricious, there would have been no rivalries, the struggle for existence would have been abolished, and the millennium would have finally set in. But it is obvious that this state of things could have been permanent only with a stationary population. Add ten fresh mouths, and as by supposition, there was only exactly enough before, somebody must go on short rations. The Atlantic society might have been a heaven upon earth, the whole nation might have consisted of just men, needing no repentance, and yet somebody must starve. Reckless Istar, non-moral Nature, would have riven the ethical fabric. I was once talking with a very eminent physician⁷ about the *vis medicatrix naturae*⁸ "Stuff!" said he, "nine times out of ten nature does not want to cure the man she wants to put him in his coffin." And Istar-Nature appears to have equally little sympathy with the

⁷ The late Sir W. Gull—H

⁸ i.e., the power of natural cure

ends of society. "Stuff! she wants nothing but a fair field and free play for her doing the strongest."

Our Atlantis may be an impossible figment, but the antagonistic tendencies which the fable adumbrates have existed in every society which was ever established, and, to all appearance, must strive for the victory in all that will be. Historians point to the greed and ambition of rulers, to the reckless turbulence of the ruled, to the debasing effects of wealth and luxury, and to the devastating wars which have formed a great part of the occupation of mankind, as the causes of the decay of states and the foundering of old civilizations, and thereby point their story with a moral. No doubt immoral motives of all sorts have figured largely among the minor causes of these events. But beneath all this superficial turmoil lay the deep-seated impulse given by unlimited multiplication. In the swarms of colonies thrown out by Phoenicia and by old Greece, in the *ver sacrum*⁹ of the Latin races; in the floods of Gauls and Teutons which burst over the frontiers of the old civilization of Europe; in the swaying to and fro of the vast Mongolian hordes in late times, the population problem comes to the front in a very visible shape. Nor is it less plainly manifest in the everlasting agrarian questions of ancient Rome than in the Arreoi societies

⁹ A special sacrificial offering presented from the firstlings of spring which the Romans customarily vowed in critical circumstances

of the Polynesian Islands

In the ancient world, and in a large part of that in which we live, the practice of infanticide was, or is, a regular and legal custom, famine, pestilence, and war were and are normal factors in the struggle for existence, and they have served, in a gross and brutal fashion, to mitigate the intensity of the effects of its chief cause

But, in the more advanced civilizations, the progress of private and public morality has steadily tended to remove all these checks. We declare infanticide murder, and punish it as such, we decree, not quite so successfully, that no one shall die of hunger, we regard death from preventible causes of other kinds as a sort of constructive murder, and eliminate pestilence to the best of our ability, we declaim against the curse of war, and the wickedness of the military spirit, and we are never weary of dilating on the blessedness of peace and the innocent beneficence of Industry. In their moments of expansion, even statesmen and men of business go thus far. The finer spirits look to an ideal *civitas dei*,¹⁰ a state when every man, having reached the point of absolute self-negation, and having nothing but moral perfection to strive after, peace will truly reign, not merely among nations, but among men, and the struggle for existence will be at an end.

Whether human nature is competent, under any

¹⁰ *i. e.*, The city of God

circumstances, to reach, or even seriously advance towards, this ideal condition, is a question which need not be discussed. It will be admitted that mankind has not yet reached this stage by a very long way, and my business is with the present. And that which I wish to point out is that, so long as the natural man increases and multiplies without restraint, so long will peace and industry not only permit, but they will necessitate, a struggle for existence as sharp as any that ever went on under the *régime* of war. If Istar is to reign on the one hand, she will demand her human sacrifices on the other.

Let us look at home. For seventy years peace and industry have had their way among us¹¹ with less interruption and under more favourable conditions than in any other country on the face of the earth. The wealth of Croesus was nothing to that which we have accumulated, and our prosperity has filled the world with envy. But Nemesis did not forget Croesus: has she forgotten us?

I think not. There are now 36,000,000 of people in our islands, and every year considerably more than 300,000 are added to our numbers¹². That is to say, about every hundred seconds, or so, a new claimant to a share in the common stock of maintenance presents him or herself among us. At the

¹¹ This was written in 1891.

¹² These numbers are only approximately accurate. In 1881, our population amounted to 35,241,482, exceeding the

present time, the produce of the soil does not suffice to feed half its population. The other moiety has to be supplied with food which must be bought from the people of food-producing countries. That is to say, we have to offer them the things which they want in exchange for the things we want. And the things they want and which we can produce better than they can are mainly manufactures—industrial products.

The insolent reproach of the first Napoleon had a very solid foundation¹⁷. We not only are, but, under penalty of starvation, we are bound to be, a nation of shopkeepers. But other nations also lie under the same necessity of keeping shop, and some of them deal in the same goods as ourselves. Our customers naturally seek to get the most and the best in exchange for their produce. If our goods are inferior to those of our competitors, there is no ground, compatible with the sanity of the buyers, which can be alleged, why they should not prefer the latter. And, if that result should ever take place on a large and general scale, five or six millions of us would soon have nothing to eat. We know what the cotton famine was, and we can therefore form some notion of what a dearth of customers would be

number in 1871 by 3,396,103. The average annual increase in the decennial period 1871-1881 is therefore 339,610. The number of minutes in a calendar year is 525,600.—H

¹⁷ Napoleon called Englishmen a nation of shopkeepers.

Judged by an ethical standard, nothing can be less satisfactory than the position in which we find ourselves. In a real, though incomplete, degree we have attained the condition of peace which is the main object of social organization, and, for argument's sake, it may be assumed that we desire nothing but that which is in itself innocent and praise-worthy—namely, the enjoyment of the fruits of honest industry. And lo! in spite of ourselves, we are in reality engaged in an internecine struggle for existence with our presumably no less peaceful and well-meaning neighbours. We seek peace and we do not ensue it. The moral nature in us asks for no more than is compatible with the general good, the non-moral nature proclaims and acts upon that fine old Scottish family motto, "Thou shalt starve ere I want." Let us be under no illusions, then. So long as unlimited multiplication goes on, no social organization which has ever been devised, or is likely to be devised, no fiddle-faddling with the distribution of wealth, will deliver society from the tendency to be destroyed by the reproduction within itself, in its intensest form, of that struggle for existence the limitation of which is the object of society. And however shocking to the moral sense this eternal competition of man against man and of nation against nation may be, however revolting may be the accumulation of misery at the negative pole of society, in contrast with that of monstrous wealth at the positive pole, this state of things must abide, and grow continually worse, so

long as Istar holds her way unchecked It is the true riddle of the Sphinx, and every nation which does not solve it will sooner or later be devoured by the monster itself has generated . . .

—Thomas Henry Huxley *Social Diseases
and Worse Remedies*

[Debating Societies]

A DEBATING society is at first somewhat of a disappointment. You do not often find the youthful Demosthenes¹ chewing his pebbles in the same room with you; or, even if you do, you will probably think the performance little to be admired. As a general rule, the members speak shamefully ill. The subjects of debate are heavy and so are the fines. The Ballot Question—oldest of dialectic night-mares—is often found astride of a somnolent sederunt. The Greeks and Romans, too, are reserved as sort of *general utility* men, to do all the dirty work of illustration; and they fill as many functions as the famous waterfall scene at the 'Princess's', which I found doing duty on one evening as a gorge in Peru, a haunt of German robbers, and a peaceful vale in the Scottish borders. There is a sad absence of striking argument or real lively discussion. Indeed, you feel a growing contempt for your fellow-members, and it is not until you rise yourself to hawk and hesitate and sit shamefully down again, amid eleemosynary

¹The famous Greek orator and statesman who cured the defects in his speech by putting pebbles in his mouth and shouting against the waves of the sea.

²The question is to the adoption of a ballot-system in elections.

³Obviously the name of a theatre in Edinburgh.

applause, that you begin to find your level and value others rightly. Even then, even when failure has damped your critical ardour, you will see many things to be laughed at in the deportment of your rivals.

Most laughable, perhaps, are your indefatigable strivers after eloquence. They are of those who 'pursue with eagerness the phantoms of hope', and who, since they expect that 'the deficiencies of last sentence will be supplied by the next', have been recommended by Dr Samuel Johnson to 'attend to the History of Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia'.¹ They are characterized by a hectic hopefulness. Nothing damps them. They rise from the ruins of one abortive sentence, to launch forth into another with unabated vigour. They have all the manner of an orator. From the tone of their voice you would expect a splendid period—and lo! a string of broken-backed, disjointed clauses, eked out with stammerings and throat-clearings. They possess the art (learned from the pulpit) of rounding an uneuphonious sentence by dwelling on a single syllable—of striking a balance in a top-heavy period by lengthening out a word into a melancholy quaver. Withal, they never cease to hope. Even at last, even when they have exhausted all their ideas, even after the would-be peroration has finally refused to perorate, they remain upon their feet with their mouths open, waiting for some further inspiration, like Chaucer's

¹ The name of a prose romance by Dr Johnson

widow's son in the dung-hole, after

'His throat was hit unto nekke bone',

in vain expectation of that seed that was to be laid upon his tongue, and give him renewed and clearer utterance

These men may have something to say, if they could only say it—indeed they generally have, but the next class are people who, having nothing to say, are cursed with a facility and an unhappy command of words, that makes them the prime nuisances of the society they affect. They try to cover up their absence of matter by an unwholesome vitality of delivery. They look triumphantly round the room, as if courting applause, after a torrent of diluted truism. They talk in a circle, harping on the same dull round of argument, and returning again and again to the same remark with the same sprightliness, the same irritating appearance of novelty.

After this set, any one is tolerable, so we shall merely hint at a few other varieties. There is your man who is pre-eminently conscientious, whose face beams with sincerity as he opens on the negative, and who votes on the affirmative at the end, looking round the room with an air of chastened pride. There is also the irrelevant speaker, who rises, emits a joke or two, and then sits down again, without ever attempting to tackle the subject of debate. Again, we have men who ride pick-a-back on their family reputation, or, if their family have none, identify themselves

with some well-known statesman, use his opinions, and lend him their patronage on all occasions. This is a dangerous plan, and serves oftener, I am afraid, to point a difference than to adorn a speech.

But alas! a striking failure may be reached without tempting Providence by any of these ambitious tricks. Our own stature will be found high enough for shame. The success of three simple sentences lures us into a fatal parenthesis in the fourth, from whose shut brackets we may never disentangle the thread of our discourse. A momentary flush tempts us into a quotation, and we may be left helpless in the middle of one of Pope's couplets, a white film gathering before our eyes, and our kind friends charitably trying to cover our disgrace by a feeble round of applause. *Amis lecteurs*⁵, this is a painful topic. It is possible that we too, we, the 'potent, grave and reverend' editor⁶, may have suffered these things, and drunk as deep as any of the cup of shameful failure. Let us dwell no longer on so delicate a subject.

In spite, however, of these disagreeables, I should recommend any student to suffer them with Spartan courage, as the benefits he receives should repay him an hundredfold for them all. The life of the debating society is a handy antidote to the life of the

⁵ Gentle readers

⁶ This essay was contributed to the Edinburgh University Magazine which Stevenson started along with some other friends

class-room and quadrangle. Nothing could be conceived more excellent as a weapon against many of those *peccant humours* that we have been railing against in the jeremiad of our last 'College Paper'—particularly in the field of intellect. It is a sad sight to see our heather-scented students, our boys of seventeen, coming up to College with determined views—*roués* in speculation—having gauged the vanity of philosophy or learned to shun it as the middle-man of heresy—a company of determined, deliberate opinionists, not to be moved by all the sleights of logic. What have such men to do with study? If their minds are made up irrevocably, why burn the 'studious lamp' in search of further confirmation? Every set opinion I hear a student deliver I feel a certain lowering of my regard. He who studies, he who is yet employed in the groping for his premises, should keep his mind fluent and sensitive, keen to mark flaws and willing to surrender untenable positions. He should keep himself teachable, or cease the expensive farce of being taught. It is to further this docile spirit that we desire to press the claims of the debating societies. It is as a means of melting down this museum of premature petrifications into living and impressionable soul that we insist on their utility. If we could once prevail on our students to feel no shame in avowing an uncertain attitude towards any subject, if we could teach them that

it was unnecessary for every lad to have his *opinionette* on every topic, we should have gone a far way towards bracing the intellectual tone of the coming race of thinkers, and this it is which debating societies are so well fitted to perform

We there meet people of every shade of opinion, and make friends with them. We are to rail against a man the whole session through, and then hob-a-nob with him at the concluding entertainment. We find men of talent far exceeding our own, whose conclusions are widely different from ours, and we are thus taught to distrust ourselves. But the best means of all towards catholicity is that wholesome rule which some folk are most inclined to condemn—I mean the law of *obliged speeches*. Your senior member commands, and you must take the affirmative or the negative, just as suits his best convenience. This tends to the most perfect liberality. It is no good hearing the arguments of an opponent, for in good verity you rarely follow them, and even if you do take the trouble to listen, it is merely in a captious search for weaknesses. This is proved, I fear, in every debate, when you hear each speaker arguing out his own prepared *spécialité*^r (he never intended speaking, of course, until some remarks of, etc.), arguing out, I say, his own *coached up* subject without the least attention, to what has gone before, as utterly at sea about the drift of his adversary's speech as Panurge

^r Spéciality

when he argued with Thaumaste¹, and merely linking his own predilection to the last by a few flippant criticisms. Now, as the role stands, you are saddled with the side you disapprove, and so you are forced, by regard for your own fame, to argue out, to feel with, to elaborate completely, the case as it stands against yourself, and what a fund of wisdom do you not turn up in this idle digging of the vineyard! How many new difficulties take form before your eyes? How many super-annuated arguments cripple finally into limbo, under the glance of your enforced eclecticism!

Nor is this the only merit of Debating Societies. They tend also to foster taste, and to promote friendship between University men. This last, as we have had occasion before to say is the great requirement of our student life.

—R. L. Stevenson *The Edinburgh University Magazine*,
No 3, March, 1871

¹ The debate between Pinurge and Thaumaste in which no one understands what the other is saying is Rabelais's caricature of the debates between mediæval monks. Cf. Rabelais's *Gargantua and Pantagruel*.

[On Actors and Acting]

Players are "the abstracts and brief chronicles of the time", the motley representatives of human nature. They are the only honest hypocrites. Their life is a voluntary dream, a studied madness. The height of their ambition is to be *beside themselves*. To-day kings, to-morrow beggars, it is only when they are themselves, that they are nothing. Made up of mimic laughter and tears, passing from the extremes of joy or woe at the prompter's call, they wear the livery of other men's fortunes, their very thoughts are not their own. They are, as it were, train-bearers in the pageant of life, and hold a glass upto humanity, frailer than itself. We see ourselves at second-hand in them: they shew us all that we are, all that we wish to be, and all that we dread to be.

The stage is an epitome, a bettered likeness of the world, with the dull part left out: and, indeed, with this omission, it is nearly big enough to hold all the rest. What brings the resemblance nearer is, that, as *they* imitate us, we, in our turn, imitate them. How many fine gentlemen do we owe to the stage? How many romantic lovers are mere Romeos in masquerade? How many soft bosoms have heaved with Juliet's sighs? They teach us when to laugh and when to weep, when to love and when to hate, upon principle and with a good grace!

Wherever there is a play-house, the world will go on not amiss. The stage not only refines the manners, but it is the best teacher of morals, for it is the truest and most intelligible picture of life. It stamps the image of virtue on the mind by first softening the rude materials of which it is composed, by a sense of pleasure. It regulates the passions by giving a loose to the imagination. It points out the selfish and depraved to our detestation, the amiable and generous to our admiration; and if it clothes the more seductive vices with the borrowed graces of wit and fancy, even those graces operate as a diversion to the coarser poison of experience and bad example, and often prevent or carry off the infection by inoculating the mind with a certain taste and elegance.

To shew how little we agree with the common declamations against the immoral tendency of the stage on this score, we will hazard a conjecture, that the acting of the *Beggar's Opera* a certain number of nights every year since it was first brought out, has done more toward putting down the practice of highway robbery, than all the gibbets that ever were erected¹. A person, after seeing this piece is too deeply imbued with a sense of humanity, is in too good humour with himself and the rest of the world, to

¹ The *Beggar's Opera* by Gay celebrated the adventures of Captain Macheath, a "gentleman of the road." Under cover of thieves and robbers who are the characters of this piece, Gay satirizes the society of his times.

set about cutting throats or rifling pockets. Whatever makes a jest of vice, leaves it too much a matter of indifference for any one in his senses to rush desperately on his ruin for its sake

We suspect that the contrary effect must be produced by the representation of *George Barnwell*², which is too much in the style of the Ordinary's sermon³ to meet with any better success. The mind, in such cases, instead of being deterred by the alarming consequences held out to it, revolts against the denunciation of them as an insult offered to its free-will, and, in a spirit of defiance, returns a practical answer to them, by daring the worst that can happen. The most striking lesson ever read to levity and licentiousness, is in the last act of the *Inconstant*, where young Mirabel is preserved by the fidelity of his mistress, Orinda⁴, in the disguise of a page, from the hands of assassins, into whose powers he has been allured by the temptations of vice and beauty. There never was a rake who did not become in imagination a reformed man, during the representation of the last trying scene of this admirable comedy.

If the stage is useful as a school of instruction, it is no less so as a source of amusement. It is the

² *George Barnwell* is a prose tragedy by George Lillo, dealing with the life and execution of an apprentice.

³ *i.e.*, dull. Ordinary here means the chaplain of Newgate prison.

⁴ Oriana (not Orinda as Hazlitt wrongly says) is a character in *The Inconstant*, a comedy by George Farquhar.

source of the greatest enjoyment at the time, and a never-failing fund of agreeable reflection afterwards. The merits of a new play, or of a new actor, are always among the first topics of polite conversation. One way in which public exhibitions contribute to refine and humanize mankind, is by supplying them with ideas and subjects of conversation and interest in common. The progress of civilization is in proportion to the number of commonplaces current in society.

For instance, if we meet with a stranger at an inn or in a stage-coach, who knows nothing but his own affairs, his shop, his customers, his farm, his pigs, his poultry, we can carry on no conversation with him on these local and personal matters: the only way is to let him have all the talk to himself. But if he has fortunately ever seen Mr Liston's act, this is an immediate topic of mutual conversation, and we agree together the rest of the evening in discussing the merits of that inimitable actor, with the same satisfaction as in talking over the affairs of the most intimate friend.

If the stage thus introduces us familiarly to our contemporaries, it also brings us acquainted with former times. It is an interesting revival of past ages, manners, opinions, dresses, persons, and actions,—whether it carries us back to the wars of York and

¹ John Liston, a famous comic actor who played from 1805 to 1837

Lancaster, or half way back to the heroic times of Greece and Rome, in some translation from the French, or quite back to the age of Charles II in the scenes of Congreve and Etherege (the gay Sir George!)⁶—happy age, when kings and nobles led purely ornamental lives, when the utmost stretch of a morning's study went no further than the choice of a sword-knot, or the adjustment of a side-curl, when the soul spoke out in all the pleasing eloquence of dress, and beaux and belles, enamoured of themselves in one another's follies, fluttered like gilded butterflies in giddy mazes through the walks of St. James's Park⁷

A good company of comedians, a Theatre-Royal judiciously managed, is your true Herald's college, the only Antiquarian Society, that is worth a rush⁸ It is for this reason that there is such an air of romance about the players, and that it is pleasanter to see them, even in their own persons, than any of the three learned professions⁹ We feel more respect for John

⁶ Sir George Etherege and William Congreve were two of the most brilliant comic dramatists of the Restoration

⁷ A fashionable resort in the latter half of the seventeenth century

⁸ *i.e.*, a theatre is the only organization which preserves the manners and customs of bygone ages, and not a Herald's College which authoritatively settles a man's rank and genealogy, nor an Antiquarian Society which conducts researches etc., etc

⁹ Law, medicine and theology

Kemble¹⁰ in a plain coat, than for the Lord Chancellor on the woolsack. He is surrounded, to our eyes, with a greater number of imposing recollections; he is a more reverend piece of formality; a more complicated tissue of costume. We do not know whether to look upon this accomplished actor as Pierre or King John or Coriolanus or Cato or Leontes or the Stranger. But we see him in a stately hieroglyphic of humanity; a living monument of departed greatness, a sombre comment on the rise and fall of kings. We look after him till he is out of sight, as we listen to a story of one of Ossian's heroes¹¹, to "a tale of other times!"

One of the most affecting things we know is to see a favourite take leave of the stage. We were present not long ago when Mr Bannister¹² quitted it. We do not wonder that his feelings were overpowered on the occasion. ours were nearly so. We remembered him, in the first hey-day of our youthful spirits, in the *Prize*, in which he played so delightfully with that fine old croaker Suett, and Madame Storace,—

¹⁰ John Philip Kemble (1757-1823), one of the most famous English actors. Pierre, King John etc are the various parts in which he distinguished himself.

¹¹ Ossian's poems were *Ingal* and *Temora*, which, MacPherson who was responsible for them, was supposed to have translated from old Gaelic.

¹² John Bannister, an actor of note in Hazlitt's time. Hazlitt gives a list of the plays and parts in which he made his mark.

[On Literature and Style]

Here, then, in the first place¹, I observe, gentlemen, that Literature, from the derivation of the word, implies writing, not speaking, this, however, arises from the circumstance of the copiousness, variety, and public circulation of the matters of which it consists. What is spoken cannot outrun the range of the speaker's voice, and perishes in the uttering. When words are in demand to express a long course of thought, when they have to be conveyed to the ends of the earth, or perpetuated for the benefit of posterity, they must be written down, that is, reduced to the shape of literature; still, properly speaking, the terms, by which we denote this characteristic gift of man, belong to its exhibition by means of the voice, not of handwriting. It addresses itself, in its primary idea, to the ear, not to the eye. We call it the power of speech, we call it language, that is, the use of the tongue, and, even when we write, we still keep in mind what was its original instrument, for we use freely such terms in our books as "saying", "speaking," "telling," "talking," "calling," we use the terms "phraseology" and "diction", as if we were still

¹ This extract is taken from Newman's address on *Literature* (1858), which was one of the last he delivered in connection with his university work in Dublin. It was published in his *The Idea of a University*

addressing ourselves to the ear.

Now I insist on this, because it shows that speech, and therefore Literature, which is its permanent record, is essentially a personal work. It is not some production or result, attained by the partnership of several persons, or by machinery, or by any natural process, but in its very idea it proceeds, and must proceed, from some one given individual. Two persons cannot be the authors of the sounds which strike our ear, and, as they cannot be speaking one and the same speech, neither can they be writing one and the same lecture or discourse,—which must certainly belong to some one person or other, and is the expression of that one person's ideas and feelings,—ideas and feelings personal to himself, though others may have parallel and similar ones,—proper to himself, in the same sense as his voice, his air, his countenance, his carriage, and his action, are personal. In other words, Literature expresses, not objective truth, as it is called, but subjective, not things, but thoughts.

Now this doctrine will become clearer by considering another use of words, which does relate to objective truth, or to things, which relates to matters, not personal, not subjective to the individual, but which, even were there no individual man in the whole world to know them or to talk about them, would exist still. Such objects become the matter of Science, and words indeed are used to express them, but such words are rather symbols than language, and however many we use, and however we may

perpetuate them by writing, we never could make any kind of literature out of them, or call them by that name. Such, for instance, would be Euclid's Elements, they relate to truths universal and eternal, they are not mere thoughts, but things they exist in themselves, not by virtue of our understanding them, not in dependence upon our will, but in what is called the *nature* of things, or at least on conditions external to us. The words, then, in which they are set forth are not language, speech, literature, but, rather, as I have said, symbols. And, as a proof of it, you will recollect that it is possible, nay usual, to set forth the propositions of Euclid in algebraical notation, which, as all would admit, has nothing to do with literature. What is true of mathematics is true also of every study, so far forth as it is scientific, and is thereby withdrawn from the province of literature. Thus metaphysics, ethics, law, political economy, chemistry, theology, cease to be literature in the same degree as they are capable of a severe scientific treatment. And hence it is that Aristotle's works on the one hand, though at first sight literature, approach in character, at least a great number of them, to mere science, for even though the things which he treats of and exhibits may not always be real and true, yet he treats them as if they were, not as if they were the thoughts of his own mind, that is, he treats them scientifically. On the other hand, Law or Natural History has before now been treated by an author with so much of colouring derived from his own mind as to become a

sort of literature, this is especially seen in the instance of Theology, when it takes the shape of Pulpit Eloquence. It is seen too in historical composition, which becomes a mere specimen of chronology, or a chronicle, when divested of the philosophy, the skill, or the party and personal feelings of the particular writer. Science, then, has to do with things, literature with thoughts, science is universal, literature is personal, science uses words merely as symbols, but literature uses language in its full compass, as including phraseology, idiom, style, composition, rhythm, eloquence, and whatever other properties are included in it.

Let us then put aside the scientific use of words, when we are to speak of language and literature. Literature is the personal use or exercise of language. That this is so is further proved from the fact that one author uses it so differently from another. Language itself in its very origination would seem to be traceable to individuals. Their peculiarities have given it its character. We are often able in fact to trace particular phrases or idioms to individuals, we know the history of their rise. Slang, surely, as it is called, comes of, and breathes of, the personal. The connexion between the force of words in particular languages, and the habits and sentiments of the nations speaking them has often been pointed out. And, while the many use language as they find it, the man of genius uses it indeed, but subjects it withal to his own purposes, and moulds it according to his own

peculiarities The throng and succession of ideas, thoughts, feelings, imaginations, aspirations which pass within him, the abstractions, the juxtapositions, the comparisons, the discriminations, the conceptions, which are so original in him, his views of external things, his judgments upon life, manners and history, the exercises of his wit, of his humour, of his depth, of his sagacity, all these innumerable and incessant creations, the very pulsation and throbbing of his intellect, does he image forth, to all does he give utterance, in a corresponding language, which is as multi-form as this inward mental action itself and analogous to it, the faithful expression of his intense personality, attending on his own inward world of thought as its very shadow so that we might as well say that one man's shadow is another's as that the style of a really gifted man can belong to any but himself. It follows him about as a shadow. His thought and feeling are personal, and so his language is personal

Thought and speech are inseparable from each other Matter and expression are parts of one style is a thinking out into language This is what I have been laying down, and this is literature, not *things*, not the verbal symbols of things; not on the other hand mere *words*, but thoughts expressed in language

—Newman *The Idea of a University*

[My Bicycle and I]

We two were sitting together on the wintry Campagna¹ grass, the rest of the party, with their proud, tiresome horses, had disappeared beyond the pale green undulations, their carriage had stayed at that castellated bridge of the Anio. The great moist Roman sky, with its song of invisible larks, arched all round, above the rejuvenated turf rustled last year's silvery hemlocks. The world seemed very large, significant, and delightful, and we had it all to ourselves, as we sat there side by side, my bicycle and I.

'Tis conceited, perhaps, to imagine myself an item in the musings of my silent companion, though I would fain be a pleasant one. But this much is certain, that, among general praising of life and of things, my own thoughts fell to framing the praises of bicycles. They were deeply felt, and as such not without appearance of paradox. What an excellent thing, I reflected, it is that a bicycle is satisfied to be quiet, and is not in the way when one is off it! Now, my friends out there, on their great horses, as Herbert of Cherbury calls them, are undoubtedly enjoying many and various pleasures, but they miss this pleasure

¹The low-lying country surrounding Rome. Some other place names mentioned in this essay also refer to cities or valleys not far from Rome.

of resting quietly on the grass with their steeds sitting calmly beside them. They are busy riding, moreover, and have to watch, to curb or humour the fancies of their beasts, instead of indulging their own fancy; let alone the necessity of keeping up a certain prestige. They are, in reality, domineered over by these horses, and these horses' standard of living, as fortunate people are dominated by their servants, their clothes, and their family connections, much as Merovingian Kings², we were taught in our "Cours de Dictées",³ were dominated by the mayors of the palace. Instead of which, but accidents (and the malignity of bottle-glass and shoe-nails), I am free, and am helped to ever greater freedom by my bicycle.

These thoughts came to me while sitting there on the grass slopes, rather than while speeding along the solitary road which snakes across them to the mountains, because the great gift of the bicycle consists to my mind in something apart from mere rapid locomotion; so much so, indeed, that those persons forego it, who scorch along for mere exercise, or to get from place to place, or to read the record of miles on their cyclometer. There is an unlucky tendency—like the tendency to litter on the part of inanimates and to dullness on that of our fellow-creatures—to allow every new invention to add to life's complications,

² The name of a dynasty which ruled over the Franks in France

³ Course of dictations

and every new power to increase life's hustling, so that, unless we can dominate the mischief, we are really the worse off instead of the better. It is so much easier, apparently, to repeat the spell (once the magician has spoken it) which causes the broomstick to fetch water from the well, as in Goethe's ballad, than to remember or know, the potent word which will put a stop to his floodings,¹ that, indeed, seems reserved to the master wizard, while the tiros of life's magic, puffed up with half-science, do not drink, but drown. In this way bicycling has added, methinks, an item to the hurry and breathlessness of existence, and to the difficulty of the passing hour—nay, the passing landscape. I have only once travelled on a bicycle, and, despite pleasant incidents and excellent company, I think it was a mistake, there was an inn to reach, a train to catch, a meal to secure, darkness to race against, and an order was issued, "always make as much pace as you can at the beginning, because there may be some loss of time later on," which was insult and ingratitude to those mountain sides and valleys of Subiaco and Tivoli, and to the ghosts of St Benedict, of Nero, and of the delightful beribboned Sibyl, who beckoned us to rest in their company.

How different from this when one fares forth, companioned by one of the same mind, or, better

¹ i.e., we cannot often control the mischievous consequences of our own actions

still, with one's own honourable self, exploring the unknown, revisiting the already loved, with some sort of resting-place to return to, and the knowledge of time pleasantly effaced! One speeds along the straight road, flying into the beckoning horizon, conscious only of mountain lines or stacked cloud masses, living, for the instant, in air, space become fluid and breathable, earth a mere detail; and then, at the turn, slackening earth's power asserting itself with the road's windings. Curiosity keenly on edge, or memory awakened, and the past also casting its spells, with the isolated farms or paved French villages by the river-bank, or the church spire, the towers, in the distance A wrong turn is no hardship, it merely gives additional knowledge of the country, a further detail of the characteristic lie of the land, a different view of some hill or some group of buildings. Indeed, I often deliberately deflect, try road and lane merely to return again, and have bicycled sometimes half an hour round a church to watch its transepts and the chancel fold and unfold, its towers change place, and its outline of high roof and gargoyles alter on the landscape. Then the joy, spiced with the sense of reluctance, of running on one's steps, sometimes on the same day, or on successive days, to see the same house, to linger under the same poplars by the river. Those poplars I am thinking of are alongside a stately old French mill, built, towered, and gabled, of fine grey stone; and the image of them brings up in my mind, with the draught and foam of

the weir and the glassiness of the backwater, and the whirr of the horse-ferry's ropes, that some of the most delightful moments which one's bicycle can give are those when the bicycle is resting against a boat's side (once also in Exmouth harbour); or chained to an old lych-gate, or, as I remarked about my Campagna ride, taking its rest also and indulging its musings.

I have alluded to the variety and alteration of pace which we can, and should, get while bicycling. Skimming rapidly over certain portions of the road—sordid suburbs, for instance,—and precipitating our course to the points where we slacken and linger, the body keeps step with the spirit, and actuality forestalls, in a way, the selection by memory; significance, pleasantness, choice, not brute outer circumstance, determining the accentuation, the phrasing (in musical sense) of our life. For life must be *phrased*, lest it become mere jabber, without pleasure or lesson. Indeed, one may say that if games teach a man to stand a reverse or snatch an opportunity, so bicycling might afford an instructive analogy of what things to notice, to talk about and remember on life's high-roads and lanes, and what others, whizzing past on scarce skimming wheel, to reject from memory and feeling.

The bicycle, in this particular, like the imagination it so well symbolizes, is a great liberator, freeing us from dwelling among ugliness and rubbish. It gives a foretaste of the freedom of the spirit, reducing mankind to the only real and final inequality.

inequality in the power of appreciating and enjoying. The poor clerk, or school-mistress, or obscure individual from Grub Street⁷ can, with its help, get as much variety and pleasure out of a hundred miles' circuit as more fortunate persons from unlimited globe-trotting. Nay, the fortunate person can on a bicycle get rid of the lumber and litter which constitutes so large a proportion of the gifts of Fortune. For the things *one has to have*, let alone the things *one has to do* (in deference to 'butler and lady's maid, high priests of fitness'), are as well left behind, if only occasionally. And among such doubtful gifts of fortune is surely the thought of the many people employed in helping one to do nothing whatever. It spoils the Campagna, for instance, to have a brougham, with coachman and footman, and grooms to lead back the horses, all kicking their heels at the bridge of the Anio, worthy persons, no doubt, and conscientiously subserving our higher existence, but the bare fact of whom, their well-appointed silhouettes, seen somehow incongruous as we get further and more solitary among the pale grass willows, deeper into that immense space, that unlimited horizon of ages.

These are some of the prestigious merits of the bicycle, though many more might be added. This grotesque iron courser, not without some of the grasshopper's absurd weirdness, is a creature of infinite

⁷ A street in London once famous for literary hacks and inferior literary publications

[Larger Feet for Women¹]

Feminists who are so emphatic that in the modern world women must learn to stand on their own feet must be reading with much satisfaction the news that women's feet are, in sober measurable fact, getting steadily larger. The bootsellers, who kneel and know, say that it is so, and that the last five or six years have seen a marked expansion. Women may not take up as much room as they did in the crinoline days², but their effective occupation of the soil is more complete. The thought at once arises whether, if these measurements are correct, firm feet are not really entitled to some of the credit that has been attributed to strong heads. If girls to-day do not swoon at unexpected and unwelcome news and flop into the nearest arms, it may not be that shock is received with more inward equanimity, but that the stance is firmer because the boots are larger. The tradition, now so firmly and falsely established, that our grandmothers and great-grandmothers were easily overcome is probably due to a

¹ A good example of a humorous and mock-serious essay on a trivial subject. As will be obvious from the first few sentences, it is a commentary on the information published probably in a boot-sellers' journal that women's feet were getting steadily larger.

² In the nineteenth century a device, called 'crinoline' was used for expanding the petticoats.

somewhat frequent lack of balance in the small shoes which vanity dictated. Certainly the change is all to the good. Bigger boots mean more scope for everybody concerned, stranger patterns, more material, and altogether more to think about. The face can now be given a little rest³. It is true that the outlook is bad for beetles, whose chances of escape diminish as the human foot expands, but few women weep for beetles. As for vanity, if it will be mortified in some, it will receive a new spur in others, and it is surely all to the good that fashions in such matters should rotate rapidly so that every woman gets her chance of being conscious of exceptional elegance and of pitying others. Let there now dawn the day for heavy hoofs, when lovers will trace out with admiration the deep oblong imprints which their beloved has left on the muddy road.

For it is important that the large foot shall be acclaimed. If the influence of an old fashion is permitted to make women secretive, so that a great deal of secret measuring goes on in bath-rooms⁴, and foot-reducing is added to the cares of the day, references to feet will cease to be unwelcome, and yet the language of admiration is full of such references. The lover at her feet, even the proposal on bended knee, will be something the sensitive female will be resolved to head off, not from any intention of an ultimate

³ Rest from powdering

⁴ A reference to the feminine craze for slimming

No, but from a morbid sensitiveness about exposing feet the size of rowing boats to any close inspection. The flurried framer of endearing speeches will have to abandon many of the best tropes of the poets and stock passages of the novels, if big feet are covered with ever-lengthening dresses and treated in the spirit of the old Court saying that the Queen of Spain has no legs⁵ But there is fortunately an easy way of making large feet popular. They are a mark of youth, and it is the new-comers into the ranks of young womanhood who have the large feet, and the tendency, say the bootmakers, is progressive. An inch on the shoe suggests a year off the age. The short girl, the girl with so little neck that she might safely have married Henry VIII himself, can still carry a small foot with pride, since beauty is a matter of proportion, but those who are tall must show large and prominent boots if they want to be thought the very latest models in humankind. To the Chinese, to whom age is so venerable, this argument would make no appeal, but the Chinese feet take up little room enough, large though China is. In the West, where the value set on youth is a biting commentary on what people make of themselves if given enough time, the late dates of large feet will be almost decisive. And those whose particular hope it is to see women taking their equal place with men in all the great national sports will

⁵ Because her legs and feet were completely concealed by her dress

rejoice that the last stronghold of masculinity, Association football⁶, is now likely to fall, men will learn a new respect for women when women have grown feet large enough and heavy enough to give those hefty memorable hacks with which whole matches are won

The Times. March 7, 1932

⁶ What is known as ordinary football in India In England Association football is distinguished from Rugby

[English Love of Banquets]

The English are at present employed in celebrating a feast, which becomes general every seventh year;¹ the parliament of the nation being then dissolved, and another appointed to be chosen. This solemnity falls infinitely short of our Feast of the Lanterns² in magnificence and splendour; it is also surpassed by others of the East in unanimity and pure devotion, but no festival in the world can compare with it for eating. Their eating, indeed, amazes me, had I five hundred heads, and were each head furnished with brains, yet would they all be insufficient to compute the number of cows, pigs, geese, and turkeys, which, upon this occasion, die for the good of their country.

To say the truth, eating seems to make a grand ingredient in all English parties of zeal, business, or amusement. When a church is to be built, or an hospital endowed, the directors assemble, and instead

¹ This essay is about the quarrels and the festivity of election times. With a gentle humour Goldsmith ridicules the English habit of excessive eating. By the Septennial Act of 1715, the duration of each Parliament was fixed as seven years. It is five now.

² Goldsmith is writing this essay in the person of a Chinese philosopher. This Feast of the Lanterns is celebrated on a day set apart for the worship of the moon. It takes place at night and is famous for its brilliant illuminations.

of consulting upon it, they eat upon it, by which means the business goes forward with success. When the poor are to be relieved, the officers appointed to dole out public charity assemble and eat upon it. Nor has it ever been known that they filled the bellies of the poor, till they had previously satisfied their own. But in the election of magistrates the people seem to exceed all bounds: the merits of a candidate are often measured by the number of his treats, his constituents assemble, eat upon him, and lend their applause, not to his integrity or sense, but to the quantities of his beef and brandy.

And yet I could forgive this people their plentiful meals on this occasion, as it is extremely natural for every man to eat a great deal when he gets it for nothing, but what amazes me is, that all this good living no way contributes to improve their good humour. On the contrary, they seem to lose their temper as they lose their appetites, every morsel they swallow, and every glass they pour down, serves to increase their animosity. Many an honest man, before as harmless and tame as a rabbit, when loaded with a single election dinner, has become more dangerous than a charged culverin. Upon one of these occasions I have actually seen a bloody-minded man-milliner sally forth at the head of a mob, determined to face a desperate pastry-cook, who was general of the opposite party.

But you must not suppose they are without a pretext for thus beating each other. On the contrary,

no man here is so uncivilized as to beat his neighbour without producing very sufficient reasons. One candidate, for instance, treats with gin, a spirit of their own manufacture, another always drinks brandy, imported from abroad. Brandy is a wholesome liquor, gin, a liquor wholly their own. This, then, furnishes an obvious cause of quarrel,—whether it be most reasonable to get drunk with gin, or get drunk with brandy? The mob meet upon the debate, fight themselves sober, and then draw off to get drunk again, and charge for another encounter. So that the English may now properly be said to be engaged in war, since, while they are subduing their enemies abroad, they are breaking each other's heads at home.

I lately made an excursion to a neighbouring village, in order to be a spectator of the ceremonies practised upon this occasion. I left town in company with three fiddlers, nine dozens of hams, and a corporation poet, which were designed as reinforcements to the gin-drinking party. We entered the town with a very good face, the fiddlers, no way intimidated by the enemy, kept handling their arms up the principal street.^a By this prudent manœuvre, they took peaceable possession of their head quarters, amidst the shouts of multitudes, who seemed perfectly

^a The 'arms' of the fiddlers are, of course, their fiddles. Compare this paragraph with a similar passage in Fielding's 'History of the Mob'. The elections, alas, are not conducted with half this boisterous fun in our own day. The gently sarcastic style of Goldsmith is extremely pleasing.

rejoiced at hearing their music, but above all at seeing their bacon

I must own, I could not avoid being pleased to see all ranks of people, on this occasion, levelled into an equality, and the poor, in some measure, enjoying the primitive privileges of nature. If there was any distinction shown, the lowest of the people seemed to receive it from the rich. I could perceive a cobbler with a levee at his door, and a haberdasher giving audience from behind the counter.

But my reflections were soon interrupted by a mob, who demanded whether I was for the distillery or the brewery. As these were terms with which I was totally unacquainted, I chose at first to be silent, however, I know what might have been the consequence of my reserve, had not the attention of the mob been called off to a skirmish between a brandy-drinker's cow and a gin-drinker's mastiff, which turned out, greatly to the satisfaction of the mob, in favour of the mastiff.

The spectacle, which afforded high merriment, was at last ended by the appearance of one of the candidates, who came to harangue the mob. He made a very pathetic speech upon the late excessive importation of foreign drams, and the downfall of the distillery, I could see some of the audience shed tears. He was accompanied in his procession by Mrs Deputy and Mrs Mayoress. Mrs Deputy was not in the least in liquor, and as for Mrs Mayoress, one of the spectators assured me in my ear, that—she was a very fine

woman before she had the small-pox.

Mixing with the crowd, I was now conducted to the hall where the magistrates are chosen but what tongue can describe this scene of confusion! the whole crowd seemed equally inspired with anger, jealousy, politics, patriotism, and punch I remarked one figure that was carried up by two men upon this occasion I at first began to pity his infirmities as natural, but soon found the fellow so drunk that he could not stand, another made his appearance to give the vote, but though he could stand he actually lost the use of his tongue, and remained silent, a third, who, though excessively drunk, could both stand and speak, being asked the candidate's name for whom he voted, could be prevailed upon to make no other answer but "Tobacco and brandy." In short, an election hall seems to be a theatre, where every passion is seen without disguise, a school where fools may readily become worse, and where philosophers may gather wisdom

—Goldsmith. *The Citizen of the World*,
Letter CXII

[Getting up on Cold Mornings]

An Italian author—Giulio Cordara, a Jesuit—has written a poem upon insects, which he begins by insisting, that those troublesome and abominable little animals were created for our annoyance, and that they were certainly not inhabitants of Paradise. We of the north may dispute this piece of theology; but on the other hand, it is clear as the snow on the house-tops, that Adam was not under the necessity of shaving, and that when Eve walked out of her delicious bower, she did not step upon ice three inches thick.

Some people say it is a very easy thing to get up of a cold morning. You have only, they tell you, to take the resolution, and the thing is done. This may be very true, just as a boy at school has only to take a flogging, and the thing is over. But we have not at all made up our minds upon it, and we find it a very pleasant exercise to discuss the matter, candidly, before we get up. This, at least, is not idling, though it may be lying. It affords an excellent answer to those who ask how lying in bed can be indulged in by a reasoning being,—a rational creature. How? Why, with the argument calmly at work in one's head, and the clothes over one's shoulder. Oh—it is a fine way of spending a sensible, impartial half-hour.

If these people would be more charitable they would get on with their argument better. But they

are apt to reason so ill, and to assert so dogmatically, that one could wish to have them stand round one's bed, of a bitter morning, and *lie* before their faces. They ought to hear both sides of the bed, the inside and out. If they cannot entertain themselves with their own thoughts for half-an-hour or so, it is not the fault of those who can.

Candid inquiries into one's decumbency, besides the greater or less privileges to be allowed a man in proportion to his ability of keeping early hours, the work given his faculties, etc., will at least concede their due merits to such representations as the following. In the first place, says the injured but calm appealer, I have been warm all night, and find my system in a state perfectly suitable to a warm-blooded animal. To get out of this state into the cold, besides the inharmonious and uncritical abruptness of the transition, is so unnatural to such a creature, that the poets, refining upon the tortures of the damned, make one of their greatest agonies consist in being suddenly transported from heat to cold,—from fire to ice. They are "haled" out of their "beds", says Milton, by "harpy-footed furies",—fellows who come to call them. In my first movement towards the anticipation of getting up I find that such parts of the sheets and bolster as are exposed to the air of the room are stone-cold. On opening my eyes, the first thing that meets them is my own breath rolling forth, as if in the open air, like smoke out of a chimney. Think of this symptom. Then I turn my eyes sideways and

see the window all frozen over Think of that. Then the servant comes in. "It is very cold this morning, is it not?"—"Very cold, sir"—"Very cold indeed, isn't it?"—"Very cold indeed, Sir"—"More than usually so, isn't it, even for this weather?" (Here the servant's wit and good-nature are put to a considerable test, and the inquirer lies on thorns for the answer) "Why, sir . . . I think it *is*" (Good creature! There is not a better or more truth-telling servant going) "I must rise, however—get me some warm water"—Here comes a fine interval between the departure of the servant and the arrival of the hot water, during which, of course, it is of "no use?" to get up The hot water comes "Is it quite hot?"—"Yes, Sir"—"Perhaps too hot for shaving I must wait a little?"—"No Sir, it will just do" (There is an over-nice propriety sometimes, an officious zeal of virtue, a little troublesome) "Oh—the shirt—you must air my clean shirt, linen gets very damp this weather"—"Yes, sir" Here another delicious five minutes A knock at the door "Oh, the shirt—very well My stockings—I think the stockings had better be aired too"—"Very well, sir"—Here another interval At length every thing is ready, except myself I now, continues our incumbent (a happy word, by the bye, for the country-vicar)—I now cannot help thinking a good deal—who can?—upon the unnecessary and villainous custom of shaving it is a thing so unmanly (here I nestle closer)—so effeminate (here I recoil from an unlucky step into the

colder part of the bed)—no wonder that the Queen of France took part with the rebels against that degenerate King, her husband, who first affronted her smooth visage with a face like her own. The Emperor Julian never showed the luxuriance of his genius to better advantage than in reviving the flowing beard. Look at Cardinal Bembo's picture—at Michael Angelo's—at Titian's—at Shakespeare's—at Fletcher's—at Spenser's—at Chaucer's—at Alfred's—at Plato's—I could name a great man for every tick of my watch¹.—Look at the Turks, a grave and otiose people—Think of Haroun Al Raschid and bed-ridden Hassan—Think of Wortley Montague, the worthy son of his mother, above the prejudice of his time.—Look at the Persian gentlemen, whom one is ashamed of meeting about the suburbs, their dress and appearance are so much finer than our own—Lastly, think of the razor itself—how totally opposed to every sensation of bed—how cold, how edgy, how hard! how utterly different from anything like the warm and circling amplitude, which

"Sweetly recommends itself
Unto our gentler senses"

Add to this, benumbed fingers, which may help you to cut yourself, a quivering body, a frozen towel, and an ewer full of ice, and he that says there is nothing to oppose in all this, only shows, at any rate, that he has no merit in opposing it

¹ All these persons had flowing beards

Thomson the poet, who exclaims in his "Seasons"
 "Falsely luxurious' Will not man awake?"

used to lie in bed till noon, because he said he had no motive in getting up. He could imagine the good of rising, but then he could also imagine the good of lying still, and his exclamation, it must be allowed, was made upon summer-time, not winter. We must proportion the argument to the individual character. A money-getter may be drawn out of his bed by three and four pence, but this will not suffice for a student. A proud man may say, "What shall I think of myself, if I don't get up?" but the more humble one will be content to waive this prodigious notion of himself, out of respect to his kindly bed. The mechanical man shall get up without any ado at all, and so shall the barometer. An ingenious liar in bed will find hard matter of discussion even on the score of health and longevity. He will ask us for our proofs and precedents of the ill effects of lying later in cold weather, and sophisticate much on the advantages of an even temperature of body, of the natural propensity (pretty universal) to have one's way, and of the animals that roll themselves up and sleep all the winter. As to longevity, he will ask whether the longest life is of necessity the best, and whether Holburn is the handsomest street in London²

² Holburn, one of the oldest streets in London, and in Hunt's days probably the longest. If it was not then, it certainly is not the handsomest street in London now.

GETTING UP ON COLD MORNINGS

We only know of one confounding, not to say confounded argument, fit to overturn the huge luxury, the "enormous bliss"—of the vice in question. A *liar* in bed may be allowed to profess a disinterested indifference for his health or longevity, but while he is showing the reasonableness of consulting his own or one person's comfort, he must admit the proportionate claim of more than one, and the best way to deal with him is this, especially for a lady, for we earnestly recommend the use of that sex on such occasions, if not somewhat *over*-persuasive, since extremes have an awkward knack of meeting. First then, admit all the ingeniousness of what he says, telling him that the bar has been deprived of an excellent lawyer³. Then look at him in the most good-natured manner in the world, with a mixture of assent and appeal in your countenance, and tell him that you are waiting breakfast for him; that you never like to breakfast without him; that you really want it too, that the servants want theirs, that you shall not know how to get the house in order unless he rises, and that you are sure he would do things twenty times worse, even than getting out of his warm bed, to put them all into good humour and a state of comfort. Then, after having said this, throw in the comparatively indifferent matter, to *him*, about his health, but tell him that it is no indifferent matter to you, that the

³ *i.e.*, the man in bed is very clever in arguments, and it is a pity he did not join the bar

sight of his illness makes more people suffer than one; but that if, nevertheless, he really does feel so very sleepy and so very much refreshed by—Yet stay; we hardly know whether the frailty of a—Yes, Yes; say that too, especially if you say it with sincerity; for if the weakness of human nature on the one hand, and the *vis inertiae*¹ on the other, should lead him to take advantage of it once or twice, good-humour and sincerity form an irresistible junction at last, and are still better and warmer things than pillows and blankets

Other little helps of appeal may be thrown in, as occasion requires. You may tell a lover, for instance, that lying in bed makes people corpulent, a father, that you wish him to complete the fine manly example he sets his children, a lady, that she will injure her bloom or her shape, which M or W admires so much, and a student or artist, that he is always so glad to have done a good day's work in his best manner

Reader And pray, Mr Indicator², how do you behave yourself in this respect?

Indicator Oh, madam, perfectly, of course, like all advisers

Reader Nay, I allow that your mode of argument does not look quite so suspicious as the old way of sermonizing and severity, but I have my

¹ Passive resistance

² i.e., Leigh Hunt himself

GETTING UP ON COLD MORNINGS

doubts, especially from that laugh of yours If I should look in to-morrow morning—

Indicator. Ah, madam, the look in of a face like yours does anything with me. It shall fetch me up at nine, if you please—*six*, I meant to say.

—Leigh Hunt *The Indicator*,

Jan 19, 1820

[An Earth upon Heaven]

Somebody, a little while ago wrote an excellent article in the *New Monthly Magazine* on "Persons one would wish to have known"¹ He should write another on "Persons one could wish to have dined with" There is Rabelais, and Horace, and the Mermaid roysters,² and Charles Cotton,³ and Andrew Marvell, and Sir Richard Steele, *cum multis aliis*⁴ and for the colloquial, if not the festive part, Swift, and Pope, and Dr Johnson, and Burke, and Horne Tooke.⁵ What a pity one cannot dine with them all round! People are accused of having earthly notions of heaven As it is difficult to have any other, we may be pardoned for thinking that we could spend a very pretty thousand years in dining and getting acquainted with all the good fellows on record, and having got used to them, we think we could go very well on, and be content to wait some other thousands for a higher beatitude Oh, to wear out one of the celestial lives

¹ This essay was written by Hazlitt

² The Elizabethan poets and dramatists who made merry at the Mermaid tavern

³ A poet of the seventeenth century and writer of much delightful burlesque verse

⁴ *i.e.*, with many other men

⁵ A politician and a 'philosophical grammarian' of the eighteenth century.

AN EARTH UPON HEAVEN

of a triple century's duration, and exquisitely to grow old, in reciprocating dinners and teas with the immortals of old books! Will Fielding "leave his card"⁶ in the next world? Will Berkeley (an angel in a wig and lawn sleeves⁷) come to ask how Utopia gets on? Will Shakespeare (for the greater the man, the more the good-nature might be expected) know by intuition that one of his readers (knocked up with bliss) is dying to see him at the Angel and Turk's Head,⁸ and come longing with his hands in his doublet-pockets accordingly?

It is a pity that none of the great geniuses, to whose lot it has fallen to describe a future state, has given us his own notions of heaven. Their accounts are all modified by the national theology, whereas the Apostle himself has told us, that we can have no conception of the blessings intended for us. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard"⁹ etc. After this, Dante's shining lights are poor. Milton's heaven, with the armed youth exercising themselves in military games, is worse. His best Paradise was on earth, and a very pretty heaven he made of it. For our part, admitting and venerating as we do the notion of a heaven surpassing all human conception, we trust that it is no presumption to hope that the state mentioned by the Apostle is the *final* heaven, and that we may ascend

⁶ A sign by which we know that a man has visited us

⁷ The name of a tavern

⁸ The New Testament, I Cor 2, 9

and gradually accustom ourselves to the intensity of it, by others of a less superhuman nature. Familiar as we are both with joy and sorrow, and accustomed to surprises and strange sights of imagination, it is difficult to fancy even the delight of suddenly emerging into a new and boundless state of existence, where every thing is marvellous and opposed to our experience. We could wish to take gently to it, to be lost not entirely at once. Our song desires to be "a song of degrees". Earth and its capabilities—are these nothing? And are they to come to nothing? Is there no beautiful realization of the fleeting type that is shown us? No body to this shadow? No quenching to this taught and continued thirst? No arrival at these natural homes and resting-places, which are so heavenly to our imaginations, even though they be built of clay, and are situated in the fields of our infinity? We are becoming graver than we intended, but to return to our proper style—nothing shall persuade us, for the present, that Paradise Mount, in any pretty village in England has not another Paradise Mount to correspond, in some less perishing region, that is to say, provided anybody has set his heart upon it—and that we shall not all be dining, and drinking tea, and complaining of the weather (we mean for it not being perfectly blissful) three hundred years hence, in some snug interlunar spot, or perhaps in the moon itself, seeing that it is our next visible neighbour, and shrewdly suspected of being hill and dale.

It appears to us, that for a certain term of centuries, Heaven *must* consist of something of this kind. In a word, we cannot but persuade ourselves, that to realize every thing that we have justly desired on earth, will *be* heaven,—we mean, for that period: and that afterwards if we behave ourselves in a proper pre-angelical manner, we shall go to another heaven, still better, where we shall realize all that we desired in our first. Of this latter we can as yet have no conception, but of the former, we think some of the items may be as follows —

Imprimis,—(not because friendship comes before love in point of degree, but because it precedes it, in point of time, as at school we have a male companion, before we are old enough to have a female) —*Imprimis*, then, a friend. He will have the same tastes and inclinations as ourselves, with just enough difference to furnish argument without sharpness, and he will be generous, just, entertaining, and no shirker of his nectar. In short, he will be the best friend we have had upon earth. We shall talk together “of afternoons”, and when the *Earth* begins to rise (a great big moon, looking as happy as we know its inhabitants *will* be), other friends will join us, not so emphatically our friends as he, but excellent fellows all, and we shall read the poets, and have some sphere-music (if we please), or renew one of our old earthly evenings, picked out of a dozen Christmases.

Item, a mistress. In heaven (not to speak profanely) we know, upon the best authority, that people

sugar, but there will be cows for the mill. One's landscape cannot do without cows.

For horses we shall ride a Pegasus, or Aristotle's Hippogriff, or Sindbad's Roc.¹ We mean, for our parts, to ride them all, having a passion for fabulous animals. Fable will be no fable then. We shall have just as much of it as we like, and the Utilitarians² will be astonished to find how much of that sort of thing will be in request. They will look very odd, by-the-by,—those gentlemen, when they first arrive, but will soon get used to the delight, and find there was more of it in their own doctrine than they imagined.

The weather will be extremely fine, but not without such varieties as shall hinder it from getting tiresome. April will dress the whole country in diamonds, and there will be enough cold in winter to make a fire pleasant of an evening. The fire will be made of sweet-smelling turf and sunbeams; but it will have a look of coal. If we choose, now and then we shall even have inconveniences.

Leigh Hunt *The Cornucopia*,
April 2, 1828

Pegasus, the winged horse of Greek mythology, a blow from whose hoof caused the fountain Hippocrene, sacred to the Muses. Hippogriff is a fabulous monster, consisting of horse with head and wings of griffin,—mentioned in Aristotle's *Quarta de Furioso*. Roc, a large fabulous bird of Arabia and Persia, carried Sindbad out of the valley of diamonds.

¹ Followers of Mill and Bentham and believers in the doctrine of "the greatest good of the greatest number."

[A Bachelor's Complaint of the Behaviour of Married People]

As a single man, I have spent a good deal of my time in noting down the infirmities of the Married People, to console myself for those superior pleasures, which they tell me I have lost by remaining as I am.

I cannot say that the quarrels of men and their wives ever made any great impression upon me, or had much tendency to strengthen me in those anti-social resolutions, which I took up long ago upon more substantial considerations. What oftenest offends me at the houses of married persons where I visit, is an error of quite a different description,—it is that they are too loving.

Not too loving neither. that does not explain my meaning. Besides, why should that offend me? The very act of separating themselves from the rest of the world, to have the fuller enjoyment of each other's society, implies that they prefer one another to all the world.

But what I complain of is, that they carry this preference so undisguisedly, they perk it up in the faces of us single-people so shamelessly, you cannot be in their company a moment without being made to feel, by some indirect hint or open avowal, that *you* are not the object of this preference. Now there are some things which give no offence, while implied or

taken for granted merely ; but expressed, there is much offence in them. If a man were to accost the first homely-featured or plain-dressed young woman of his acquaintance, and tell her bluntly, that she was not handsome or rich enough for him, and he could not marry her, he would deserve to be kicked for his ill manners, yet no less is implied in the fact, that having access and opportunity of putting the question to her, he has never yet thought fit to do it. The young woman understands this as clearly as if it were put into words, but no reasonable young woman would think of making this the ground of a quarrel. Just as little right have a married couple to tell me by speeches and looks that are scarce less plain than speeches, that I am not the happy man,—the lady's choice. It is enough that I know that I am not: I do not want this perpetual reminding.

The display of superior knowledge or riches may be made sufficiently mortifying but these admit of a palliative. The knowledge which is brought out to insult me, may accidentally improve me, and in the rich man's houses and pictures—his parks and gardens, I have a temporary usufruct at least. But the display of married happiness has none of these palliatives, it is throughout pure, unrecompensed, unqualified insult.

Marriage by its best title is a monopoly, and not of the least invidious sort. It is the cunning of most possessors of any exclusive privilege to keep their advantage as much out of sight as possible, that their

less favoured neighbours, seeing little of the benefit, may the less be disposed to question the right. But these married monopolists thrust the most obnoxious part of their patent into our faces

Nothing is to me more distasteful than that entire complacency and satisfaction which beam in the countenances of a new-married couple,—in that of the lady particularly, it tells you, that her lot is disposed of in this world, that *you* can have no hopes of her. It is true, I have none, nor wishes either, perhaps, but this is one of those truths which ought, as I said before, to be taken for granted, not expressed.

The excessive airs which those people give themselves, founded on the ignorance of us unmarried people, would be more offensive if they were less irrational. We will allow them to understand the mysteries belonging to their own craft better than we who have not had the happiness to be made free of the company: but their arrogance is not content with in these limits. If a single person presume to offer his opinion in their presence, though upon the most indifferent subject, he is immediately silenced as an incompetent person. Nay, a young married lady of my acquaintance who, the best of the jest was, had not changed her condition above a fortnight before, in a question on which I had the misfortune to differ from her, respecting the properest mode of breeding oysters for the London market, had the assurance to ask with a sneer, how such an old Bachelor as I could pretend to know anything about such matters

But what I have spoken of hitherto is nothing to the airs which these creatures give themselves when they come, as they generally do, to have children. When I consider how little of a rarity children are,—that every street and blind alley swarms with them,—that the poorest people commonly have them in most abundance,—that there are few marriages which are not blest with at least one of these bargains,—how often they turn out ill, and defeat the fond hopes of their parents, taking to vicious courses, which end in poverty, disgrace, the gallows, etc.—I can not for my life tell what cause for pride can there possibly be in having them. If they were young phoenixes, indeed, that were born but one in a year, there might be a pretext. But when they are so common

I do not advert to the insolent merit which they assume with their husbands on these occasions. Let them look to that. But why *we*, who are not their natural-born subjects, should be expected to bring our spices, myrrh and incense,—our tribute and homage of admiration,—I do not see.

"Like as the arrows in the hand of the giant, even so are the young children," so says the excellent office in our Prayer-book appointed for the churching of women. "Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them." So say I, but then don't let him discharge his quiver upon us that are weaponless,—let them be arrows, but not to gall and stick us. I have generally observed that these arrows are double-headed, they have two forks, to be sure, to hit with one

or the other. As for instance, where you come into a house which is full of children, if you happen to take no notice of them (you are thinking of something else, perhaps and turn a deaf ear to their innocent caresses), you are set down as untractable, morose, a hater of children. On the other hand, if you find them more than usually engaging,—if you are taken with their pretty manners, and set about in earnest to romp and play with them, some pretext or other is sure to be found for sending them out of the room: they are too noisy or boisterous, or Mr —— does not like children. With one or other of these forks the arrow is sure to hit you.

I could forgive their jealousy, and dispense with toying with their brats, if it gives them any pain; but I think it unreasonable to be called upon to *love* them, where I see no occasion,—to love a whole family, perhaps, eight, nine, or ten, indiscriminately,—to love all the pretty dears, because children are so engaging.

I know there is a proverb, "Love me, love my dog." that is not always so practicable, particularly if the dog be set upon you to tease you or snap at you in sport. But a dog, or a lesser thing,—any inanimate substance, as a keepsake, a watch or a ring, a tree, or the place where we last parted when my friend went away upon a long absence, I can make shift to love, because I love him, and anything that reminds me of him, provided it be in its nature indifferent, and apt to receive whatever hue fancy can give it. But children have a real character and an essential being

of themselves. they are amiable or unamiable *per se*,¹ I must love or hate them as I see cause for either in their qualities. A child's nature is too serious a thing to admit of its being regarded as a mere appendage to another being, and to be loved or hated accordingly they stand with me upon their own stock, as much as men and women do. O! but you will say, sure it is an attractive age,—there is something in the tender years of infancy that of itself charms us. That is the very reason why I am more nice about them, but the prettier the kind of a thing is, the more desirable it is that it should be pretty of its kind. One daisy differs not much from another in glory, but a violet should look and smell the daintiest—I was always rather squeamish in my women and children.

But this is not the worst. one must be admitted into their familiarity at least, before they can complain of inattention. It implies visits, and some kind of intercourse. But if the husband be a man with whom you have lived on friendly footing before marriage,—if you did not come in on the wife's side,—if you did not sneak into the house in her train, but were an old friend in fast habits of intimacy before their courtship was so much as thought on,—look about you—your tenure is precarious—before a twelve month shall roll over your head, you shall find your old friend gradually grow cool and altered towards you, and at last seek opportunities of breaking

¹ i. e., by their very nature

A BACHELOR'S COMPLAINT OF MARRIED PEOPLE

with you I have scarce a married friend of my acquaintance, upon whose firm faith I can rely, whose friendship did not commence *after the period of his marriage*. With some limitations they² can endure that; but that the good man should have dared to enter into a solemn league of friendship in which they were not consulted, though it happened before they knew him,—before they that are now man and wife ever met,—this is intolerable to them. Every long friendship, every old authentic intimacy, must be brought into their office to be new stamped with their currency, as a sovereign Prince calls in the good old money that was coined in some reign before he was born or thought of, to be new marked and minted with the stamp of his authority, before he will let it pass current in the world. You may guess what luck generally befalls such a rusty piece of metal as I am in these *new mintings*.

Innumerable are the ways which they take to insult and worm you out of their husband's confidence. Laughing at all you say with a kind of wonder, as if you were a queer kind of fellow that said good things, *but an oddity*, is one of the ways,—they have a particular kind of stare for the purpose,—till at last the husband, who used to defer to your judgment, and would pass over some excrescences of understanding and manner for the sake of a general vein of observation (not quite vulgar) which he

² i e, the wives

perceived in you, begins to suspect whether you are not altogether a humorist,—a fellow well enough to have consorted with in his bachelor days, but not quite so proper to be introduced to ladies. This may be called the staring way, and is that which had oftenest been put in practice against me.

Then there is the exaggerating way, or the way of irony—that is where they find you an object of especial regard with their husband, who is not so easily to be shaken from the lasting attachment founded on esteem which he has conceived towards you; by never-qualified exaggerations to cry up all that you say or do, till the good man, who understands well enough that it is all done in compliment to him, grows weary of the debt of gratitude which is due to so much candour, and by relaxing a little on his part, and taking down a peg or two in his enthusiasm, sinks at length to that kindly level of moderate esteem,—that “decent affection and complacent kindness” towards you, where she herself can join in sympathy with him without much stretch and violence to her sincerity.

Another way (for the ways they have to accomplish so desirable a purpose are infinite) is, with a kind of innocent simplicity, continually to mistake what it was which first made their husband fond of you. If an esteem for something excellent in your moral character was that which riveted the chain she is to break, upon any imaginary discovery of a want of poignancy in your conversation, she will cry, “I thought, my dear, you described your friend, Mr——,

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as a great wit". If, on the other hand, it was for some supposed charm in your conversation that he first grew to like you, and was content for this to overlook some trifling irregularities in your moral deportment, upon the first notice of any of these she as readily exclaims "This, my dear, is your good Mr ——" One good lady whom I took the liberty of expostulating with for not showing me quite so much respect as I thought due to her husband's old friend, had the candour to confess to me that she often heard Mr —— speak of me before marriage, and that she had conceived a great desire to be acquainted with me, but that the sight of me had very much disappointed her expectations, for from her husband's representations of me, she had formed a notion that she was to see a fine, tall, officer-like looking man (I use her very words), the very reverse of which proved to be the truth. This was candid; and I had the civility not to ask her in return, how she came to pitch upon a standard of personal accomplishments for her husband's friends which differed so much from his own, for my friend's dimensions as near as possible approximate to mine, he standing five feet five in his shoes, in which I have the advantage of him by about half an inch, and he no more than myself exhibiting any indications of a martial character in his air or countenance.

These are some of the mortifications which I have encountered in the absurd attempt to visit at their houses. To enumerate them all would be a vain

endeavour, I shall therefore just glance at the very common impropriety of which married ladies are guilty,—of treating us as if we were their husbands, and *vice versâ*. I mean, when they use us with familiarity, and their husbands with ceremony. *Testacea*,³ for instance, kept me the other night two or three hours beyond my usual time of supping, while she was fretting because Mr —— did not come home, till the oysters were all spoiled, rather than she would be guilty of the impoliteness of touching one in his absence. This was reversing the point of good manners for ceremony is an invention to take off the uneasy feeling which we derive from knowing ourselves to be less the object of love and esteem with a fellow-creature than some other person is. It endeavours to make up, by superior attentions in little points, for that invidious preference which it is forced to deny in the greater. Had *Testacea* kept the oysters back for me, and withstood her husband's importunities to go to supper, she would have acted according to the strict rules of propriety. I know no ceremony that ladies are bound to observe to their husbands, beyond the point of a modest behaviour and decorum therefore I must protest against the vicarious gluttony of *Cerasia*,³ who at her own table sent away a dish of Morellas, which I was applying to with great goodwill, to her husband at the other end of the table, and recommended a plate of less extraordinary

³ Imaginary names to typify characters

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gooseberries to my unwedded palate in their stead
Neither can I excuse the wanton affront of——

But I am weary of stringing up all my married
acquaintance by Roman denominations Let them
amend and change their manners, or I promise to
record the full-length English of their names, to the
terror of all such desperate offenders in future

Lamb *The Essays of Elia*.

[Rain]

Not excepting the falling stars—for they are far less sudden—there is nothing in nature that so outstrips our unready eyes as the familiar rain. The rods that thinly stripe our landscape, long shafts from the clouds, if we had but agility to make the arrowy downward journey with them by the glancing of our eyes, would be infinitely separate, units, an innumerable flight of single things, and the simple movement of intricate points.

The long stroke of the raindrop, which is the drop and its path at once, being our impression of a shower, shows us how certainly our impression is the effect of the lagging, and not of the haste, of our senses. What we are apt to call our quick impression is rather our sensibly tardy, unprepared, surprised, outrun, lightly bewildered sense of things that flash and fall, wink, and are overpast and renewed, while the gentle eyes of men hesitate and mingle the beginning with the close. These inexperienced eyes, delicately baffled, detain for an instant the image that puzzles them, and so dally with the bright progress of a meteor, and part slowly from the slender course of the already fallen raindrop, whose moments are not theirs. There seems to be such a difference of instants as invests all swift movement with mystery in man's eyes, and causes the past, a moment old, to

be written, vanishing, upon the skies.

The visible world is etched and engraved with the signs and records of our halting apprehension, and the pause between the distant woodman's stroke with the axe and its sound upon our ears is repeated in the impressions of our clinging sight. The round wheel dazzles it, and the stroke of the bird's wing shakes it off like captivity evaded. Everywhere the natural haste is impatient of these timid senses; and their perception, outrun by the shower, shaken by the light, denied by the shadow, eluded by the distance, makes the lingering picture that is all our art. One of the most constant causes of all the mystery and beauty of that art is surely not that we see by flashes, but that nature flashes on our meditative eyes. There is no need for the impressionist to make haste, nor would haste avail him, for mobile nature doubles upon him, and plays with his delays the exquisite game of visibility.

Momentarily visible in a shower, invisible within the earth, the ministration of water is so manifest in the coming rain-cloud that the husbandman is allowed to see the rain of his own land, yet unclaimed in the arms of the rainy wind.¹ It is an eager lien that he binds the shower withal, and the grasp of his anxiety is on the coming cloud. His sense of property takes

¹ The description is that of a farmer who stands in his field, calculating which particular portion of a cloud would bring the rain to his bit of the land.

aim and reckons distance and speed, and even as he shoots a little ahead of the equally uncertain ground-game, he knows approximately how to hit the cloud of his possession. So much is the rain bound to the earth that, unable to compel it, man has yet found a way, by lying in wait, to put his price upon it. The exhaustible cloud "outweeps its rain," and only the inexhaustible sun seems to repeat and to enforce his cumulative fires upon every span of ground, innumerable.

Baby of the cloud, rain is carried long enough within that troubled breast to make all the multitude of days unlike each other. Rain, at the end of the cloud, divides light and withholds it, in its flight warning away the sun, and in its final fall dismissing shadow. It is a threat and a reconciliation, it removes mountains compared with which the Alps are hillocks, and makes a childlike peace between opposed heights and battlements of heaven.

Alice Meynell *Essays*.

[Clouds over the Sea]

The high, partridge-coloured heathland rolls southward, with small ridges as of a sea broken by cross-winds, or as if the heather and the hard gorse cushions had grown over ruins which time had not yet smoothed into the right curves of perfect death. A gentle wind changes the grass from silver to green, from green to silver, by depressing or lifting up the blades. In the dry heather and pallid herbage the wind sounds all the stops of despair. The note that each produces is faint, and the combination hardly louder than the sound that fancy makes among the tombs. Nevertheless, the enchantment of that little noise pours into the ear and heart a sympathy with the thousand microscopic sorrows and uncertainties of the inanimate world—a feeling that is part of the melancholy importunately intruding on a day of early spring. The larks rise, linking earth and sky with their songs, and the stonechats are restless.

There are no trees. The only house is a little, white, thatched cottage among some shining dark boats, on the distant rosy shore.

The sea makes no sound. It changes with the sky so often and so subtly that its variations are to be described, if at all, in terms not of colour but of thought. All such moods as pass through the mind of a lonely man, during long hours in a place where

the outside world does not disturb him and he lives on memory and pure reflection, are symbolized by those changes on the surface of the sea. Now it is one thing and now another; the growth is imperceptible and those moods that have passed are as hard to reconstruct as the links of a long fluctuating reverie. For the most part it is grey, a grey full of meditation and discontent.

The heathland changes with the sea. Both take their thoughts and fancies from the sky. For this is a world of clouds, earth and sea are made by them what they are. They make the sea, and they make the little pools, blue, silver, or grey, among the gorse. The clouds are always there, inhabiting a dome that is about fifty miles from the horizon up and down to the opposite horizon, and yet they are never the same.

Where do the clouds go?

The large white clouds, mountainous and of alabaster and with looks of everlastingness. I see them in the north at midday, making the hills seem level with the plain. I turn away my eyes and when next I look they are gone. They vanish like childish things. One day I made an appointment with another child to play marbles on the next morning, I never went; I forgot, I never saw the boy again, and I remember it now, for I never played marbles after that.

The high white halcyons of summer skies

The distant, icy ranges of rounded pearl down which, in terrace after terrace, the sun walks like a king to the sea in May. As I watch they grow big

CLOUDS OVER THE SEA

like roses in the sun, and they change and vanish and reappear beneath the restless sculptor's hand If a man loves what is passing away, he loves then

Those little dove-like clouds that for a moment stain the dusky clouds after an April storm—are they a metamorphosis of the Pleiades? They are gone like music, for sometimes the memory of them equals the reality and sometimes they are not to be recalled

Those Elysian, white sierras in the east, which, at the end of a day of frowns and humours, stretch far away in still and lucid air, their bases lost in blue, making the world immense, as if it were to be thus for ever and the gods to walk again.¹

The cliffs² that hold the moon imprisoned in their clefts and lure the mind to desire useless things

The flocks² that go down into the sea or behind the mountains, and thrill the heart with adventurousness and yet never move it to an adventure, but rather persuade us to care greatly for nothing except to muse and mesmerize ourselves with that old song

I did but see her passing by

And yet I love her till I die

The parcels of aerial gold which at sunset make one canopy as of a golden-foliaged tree planted over the world The night does not believe that they were ever there

¹ As they are supposed to have done in the childhood of the world

² These, it should be obvious, mean the clouds themselves

THE ART OF ESSAY-WRITING

Those caravans³ that go down the blue precipices of night intently, those dragons, lean and black, that prepare the dawn and ruin the morning star.

They change, they tarry, they travel far, they pass away, they dissolve, they cannot die. Up there, do they think, or do they watch, or do they simply act? And is it pleasant simply to act? Have all the sunsets and dawns and thunderstorms done nothing for them? I suppose that up there also nothing matters but eternity, that up there also they know nothing of eternity.

Edward Thomas *The Heart of England.*

³ The clouds themselves

